

THE GREAT FOLK OF
OLD MARYLEBONE
MRS. BAILIE SAUNDERS

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THE GREAT FOLK OF OLD MARYLEBONE.



THE GREAT FOLK OF OLD MARYLEBONE
WRITTEN BY MRS. BAILLIE SAUNDERS ✻
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY THE AUTHOR
AND A MAP.

HENRY J. GLAISHER,
57, WIGMORE STREET,
CAVENDISH SQUARE,
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PREFACE.

THE greatest compliment a preface can receive is to be ignored when the reader first takes up the book, and to be read when it is finished. The obvious inference is that the book has been found so interesting that even so dull a thing as a preface can be tolerated in its name. I do not hope that these few lines will receive such honourable treatment: they will probably not be read at all. But in case a reader more laboriously inclined than others should give time to their perusal he will find them less of a preface than a kind of apologia: a kind of polite excuse after the event.

To string together a handful of random sketches and call it a book—sketches which first appeared in the St. Marylebone Magazine in the form of articles—requires at least the explanation that it was done at the repeated request of many friends and some kind, though personally unknown, readers. Of these latter the majority are Americans; a fact which I accept as a kind of special tribute. Also I do not claim to call the little work a “history,” but simply an account of what is, to my mind, the human aspect of Marylebone’s story.

I have only endeavoured to show dead past Marylebone as my eyes see it: I have tried only to make others look into the same vision on just the very ghosts which haunt sweetly and graciously our familiar streets, and which to me are so real.

For Marylebone is redolent with its ghosts. Faint, airy, exquisite dreams of dead men and women whose lives and

works have made them immortal. It is fragrant with them, as an old garden is drowsily aromatic with Virginia-stocks and musk. And I had a sincere wish that some of these dear "great folk" should be portrayed and gathered together in simple form, just as a cluster of mellow, begemmed, immortal old Holbeins might hang side by side in a dusty corner of a forgotten chamber in Hampton Court—the undying impressions of Holbein of the men of his day. Therefore as simply my own impressions of our bygone great ones, they must be taken in all kindness.

Many other great names, besides those I have enumerated, claim attention, were space illimitable: it was difficult to select and reject, but I have made a compromise by inserting only the names of those I love the best, and this must be my answer to any accusation of incompleteness.

To the leniency of readers I commend a collection of dreams of a glorious stately Past, a past which is to me more real than the loud, hurried, rude present; with only the plea that it is a labour of absolute love.

MARGARET BAILLIE SAUNDERS.

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ILLUSTRATIONS.

CHARLES DICKENS.

"Only with a sudden, sad shadow sometimes looming over his humorous face like a cloud hiding the sun." (p. 61.)

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

45/ "A little face like a white rose, and eyes like a spaniel's with the smile of a seraph in them, and a mist of womanly tears." (p. 49.)

CHARLES WESLEY.

"He would jog along the lanes and meads of Marylebone, those heavenly songs ringing in his ears." (p. 69.)



MAP OF ST. MARYLEBONE,
From Plan of London published by Richd. Phillips in 1813.

CHAPTER I.—THE EARLIEST FOLK.

ONCE upon a time, as the fairy books say, Marylebone was a fair village, far from the madding crowd, dreamy and still. Who will now believe you if you tell them that one hundred and eighty years ago York Gate was a rippling, dancing stream, running by fresh banks of bulrushes, "long purples," king-cups, and wild violets; that lovers gathered forget-me-nots where now we know Wimpole Street; that woolly white sheep browsed in a then undreamed of Beaumont Street, and that High Street was a straggling row of white cottages, red-tiled, or brown-thatched, where they grew remarkably fine roses, and where ruddy, white-haired village urchins made daisy chains by the roadside?

In those Arcadian days the present Parish Church had not been dreamed of, there was no Marylebone Road, but a sweeping stretch of wooded country called Marylebone Park or Fields, or, as it was then spelt, "Marybone," of which Regent's Park is a remnant, attached to the old Manor House—the latter a quaint and beautiful building, now demolished, but once a royal palace, used by that intrepid Diana the Virgin Huntress, Queen Bess. Foxes, hares, and deer were all hunted in Regent's Park by the gallant courtiers of Queen Elizabeth, and parties of rubicund City Aldermen often betook themselves for a day's devotion to the chase in its far-stretching woods, with, as the old record puts it, "their ladies in waggons." What an unconsciously graphic, unconsciously humorous touch those old recorders had! One can see those aldermen's ladies dressed out magnificently in silks and velvets, puffed sleeves, huge ruffs, enormous skirts, gold chains, and all the splendid paraphernalia which went to gild the homely "Tibs," and "Bets," and "Joans," who then composed the City's chatelaines—all sitting round "in waggons!" It must have been hot, and ruinous to the

dresses, and desperately uncomfortable, and rather undignified, but it was fashionable, and so they forgot that it was also rather funny, which is a proof that progress is a very slow matter, this particular kind of human nature being sometimes still in vogue.

But to go back to the first coming into the world of Marylebone. Its earliest foundation is lost in the dim mists of tradition, but at any rate we know that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries there was a beautiful little stream, called the Bourne or Burn, which ran from Hampstead—then a tract of wild moor and forest—through miles of desolate wooded country now north and north-west London, across Oxford Street, Piccadilly, through St. James's Park near the king's palace, till it fell into the Thames.

On this silver stream stood a remote little village of rude peasants' cots, with a tiny church dedicated to St. John the Baptist. This village was called Tyburn, and this was the babyhood of Marylebone.

This tiny church stood further towards London on the site of the present Court House, close to what in after years became the great gibbeting place, the Tyburn of later history, then, of course, a remote and lonely stretch of down. This was the infancy of the Parish Church. But in the year 1400 the ruinous condition of St. John's, and the constant robberies committed on it, owing to its extreme desolation, induced the good people of Tyburn to beg for a new church. Accordingly the building was pulled down and a new one erected, as the old deed says, "further up the brook," and was re-christened by the then Bishop of London, Robert Braybrooke, after the Virgin Mary, owing, tradition says, to the river Bourne being supposed to be under the sacred patronage of that Saint. Perhaps the simple old Catholics of those days thought her powerful name would be a protection against robbers. In any case the good walls were, and, in addition, the fact that the new church of St. Mary of

the Bourne was attached by the Bishop to the Priory of St. Lawrence, in Essex, from whence it was served by monks and kept in good order. They say the "Mary's Bourne" still runs its hidden course under the busy streets of Marylebone—a submerged river; however true or untrue this may be, the idea has a charm of its own, typifying, as it unconsciously does, the deathlessness, the vivifying, health-giving, blessing properties of hidden good which no time nor change can stay.

Those Marylebone ladies to whom the subject of "woman's rights" is dear, if there are any, will be pleased to hear that the earliest known landlords of Marylebone were ladies, and that it first grew prosperous under the rule of foremothers, not forefathers! The abbesses of Barking were the owners, under the Crown, of all the manor-lands prior to the thirteenth and part of the fourteenth century, and the ruling abbess of that convent had for her lifetime complete control over the entire estate, arranging for its cultivation, and superintending and directing all its business. It is odd in these days of our busy borough to think of some veiled and "coifed" lady, with mild Madonna face, for centuries at the head of its affairs, and interrupting her hours for beads and orisons to attend to such earthly matters as fever among the Marylebone pigs, or the burning of its hay-ricks!

But before speaking of the desolate village and the charming, mild-eyed abbesses who ruled it with such consummate success through the administration of their "mere male" bailiffs and stewards, I must digress a moment to speak of the three rivers which flowed from the north into London, and which for centuries supplied the City with water. These were the Hole-bourne (or Holborn); the Ty-bourne (or Teoburna) also called the Eye-bourne, and later on the Mary-bourne; and the West-bourne, still commemorated in the name West-bourne Park. These three streams all had their source in the north, and started more or less parallel but

diverged as they grew in size: for instance, the Hole-bourne arose in and about the ponds between Hampstead and Highgate; the West-bourne in West Hampstead; and the Ty-bourne, or Mary-bourne, had two sources, one in what is now Fitzjohn's Avenue, Hampstead, and the other the site of the present Belsize estate; these two small streams joined in the neighbourhood of Barrow Hill and Primrose Hill, and proceeded in one full, strong river across Regent's Park, curving slightly westward. The present ornamental water in Regent's Park shows the shape of the Bourne, or Ty-bourne, at this point, the curved water at Cornwall Terrace showing how it here took a sudden turn towards the east. The river then turned off rather sharply down what is now known as York Gate, and ran across Marylebone Road, and behind the present Parish Chapel. At the lower end of High Street it again curved slightly east and crossed Oxford Street, exactly where the depression in the road is still visible. It then took a westerly direction, and crossed Piccadilly a little east of Berkeley Square, entered the Green Park, and broke into two "arms" or separate streams at about Buckingham Palace, which, by the bye, is built on a portion of the river bed. One of these arms ran straight towards the Thames by Westminster Abbey, and was there emptied into the big river; it was here used by the Abbot of Westminster to work his water-mill—hence the name of Millbank, afterwards given to the prison. The other arm took a more westerly curve, finally emptying itself into the Thames a little above the present Vauxhall Bridge. The area of land between these two arms was thus designated an island, surrounded as it was by the Bourne on two sides and the Thames on the other, and was called "Thorny Island," from the beautiful white-thorn which flowered on its marshy meads.

The Hole-bourne ran from Highgate through Kentish Town, Camden Town, Somers Town, Battle Bridge, Far-

ringdon Road and Farringdon Street, and so into the Thames close to Blackfriars Bridge. It was afterwards called the Fleet river, and gave its name to Fleet Street and the old Fleet prison. Hence also the name Holborn.

The West-bourne rose from several small streams beyond West Hampstead, flowing through Kilburn, Bayswater, Kensington Gardens, Hyde Park, and into the Thames near the Hospital gardens, Chelsea. One of these streams which gave rise to the West-bourne still runs through Neasden and Wembley.

One can only guess at the origin of the name "Ty" or "Eye" bourne: many people suppose that the "Ty" originated in "twy" or "two," and refers to the river's two-fold start and conclusion: other antiquarians hold to the belief that as "tye" or "tigh" is the old English for "enclosure" or "enclosed," this may refer to the river Tye-bourne as being enclosed between its two sister rivers: thus "Tigh-bourne," or "enclosed river." Others, again, say that the "Tigh" referred to the triangular enclosure of Thorny Island; but it seems certain that the origin of the "Ty" must remain a matter of conjecture; all we know is that it afterwards merged into the "Bourne" pure and simple, to which the new church (in 1400) added its name of Mary.

Long before 1400 and far back into the mists of tradition, however, the manor lands and full manorial rights belonged to the convent of Barking, to which the proceeds of the culture of the land, etc., were devoted. The Abbess had the disposal of these lands in her own hands, and it was to her advantage to see that they were properly cultivated. The ancient church of St. John's, mentioned in the foregoing article, was therefore the church of the Abbess's vassals or employés; she herself was of course stationed at Barking ruling her convent, and only came over on state visits of inspection at remote intervals when the roads permitted, possibly riding a white mare (as those stately ladies often did)

and followed by a retinue of ladies, to set Marylebone in order !

The manor estate of Mary-bourne or Ty-bourne was practically looked after by bailiffs or stewards, called "villans" or "villani" (the term is not so uncomplimentary as it sounds to modern ears), who employed three large ploughs to keep the land in cultivation, and who also had living on the estate persons inferior in office to themselves called "bordars" or "bordarii," who, under their sway, had charge of portions of land consisting of a few acres each, like our modern "hinds." Below these, again, were the "cottars," who performed the more menial farming work, and acted as servants to the superior officers. Looking at the present Parish Church, it is interesting to reflect that these good folks formed its earliest beginning, and that they are the "rude forefathers" of the Borough of Marylebone. The very name of St. John's from which it grew is forgotten. Who can now imagine the tinkling of the mass-bell sounding silver-clear across the daisied meads of Marylebone Lane, to where the pious shepherd tending his flocks by rippling Bourne stood with bare, bowed head and greeted in simple awe the sacred cadences? while inside the rude little flint church knelt peasants, cottars—"horny-handed sons of toil"—and their ruddy little ones, to the ministrations of a monk, whose coarse cloth cowl showed above his 'broidered, gorgeous vestments. And yet this was the earliest infancy of our Parish Church, and those dear people in their way worshipped the same God as we. So far, far away are they to us that their very existence is like the shadow of a dream: the church is gone, the people are gone, their graves are forgotten, their villages dust under our streets; only the God they and we worship is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Trenchant and strangely true come the words of St. Augustine: "How many days of mine and my fathers have lived and died in Thy TO-DAY."

CHAP. II.—HISTORY OF THE MANOR.

THE pale, peaceable ladies of the cloister, the first landladies of Marylebone (and therefore the prototypes of all landladies still dwelling therein), whose rule over the marshy meads of Marylebone was as mild and beneficent an influence as the westerly winds that fluttered its riverside primroses, gave way in due time to another fair feminine ruler, one Joan de Vere, a bride.

Robert de Vere, her father, who had acquired a large interest in the Marylebone estate, and who had practically held the manor under the Abbess of Barking for some years, in the early part of the fourteenth century effected its final purchase and gave it to his daughter Joan as a marriage dowry. So that again Marylebone became the possession of a woman, but this time a gay lady of wealth and position, a sparkling, youthful bride, whose hand was to be given to the Earl of Warren and Surrey.

By this marriage, which for all we know took place in the little Church of St. John's, Marylebone passed into the hands of the House of Norfolk.

In the year 1400, the parish church becoming ruinous, as before mentioned, and, moreover, being infested with thieves because so near the highway to London—*i.e.*, Marylebone Lane—it was by common consent pulled down and a new church built "farther up the stream," and presumably farther away from highway robbers. This church was built of flints and stone, on a primitive pattern, with a little, stumpy kind of spire, bearing a sun-dial, and, from the pictures, appeared to have been very small. It stood on the site of the present Parish Chapel in its own graveyard, surrounded by fields, and with the River Bourne running behind it, close up to its graveyard; about where the present school play-ground and Oldbury Place lie. Strange as it seems, this odd

little church was Marylebone Parish Church from 1400 to 1742. It was called St. Mary's, and gradually the houses in its vicinity ceased to number themselves as forming the village of Tyburn and the place acquired the name of St. Mary-le-Bourne. The southerly end of the then struggling village, however, still clung to the name Tyburn, afterwards so notorious. The churchyard of that old parish church must have grown very full during the three and a half centuries that it served as a burial ground for miles around, especially as about the reign of Elizabeth the village began to grow steadily, and in the reign of Anne was something bordering on a riverside suburb. How large the churchyard was cannot now be decided, but there are evidences that it spread over a large area, human bones having been found from time to time during excavations for building purposes for some considerable way down High Street.

Doubtless the old cemetery in Paddington Street was opened to relieve the old churchyard of 1400, and the many human bones which came to light when the Court House in Marylebone Lane was being built point to even an older date, as being the remains of the churchyard of St. John's.

In the course of centuries, as these pathetic, mute evidences of the locality of the old churchyard have come to light, it is supposed that they have been taken back to the burial ground still surrounding the Parish Chapel (once the Parish Church), and reverently put under the ground, of course without stone or headline. No other assumption would explain the fact that dusty whitened bones are still found less than twelve inches below the surface of the Parish Chapel garden, placed in such a position as to exclude the idea of their having been buried in the ordinary way. It is not safe for a gardener to dig there deep enough to plant large flowers or shrubs lest he come across the skulls of forgotten forefathers lying in the mould.

In 1503, one Thomas Hobson, a gentleman, purchased three parts of the manor of Marylebone from the Earl of Surrey, and it is supposed that he also purchased the remaining part from the Prime Minister of King Henry VII., to whom it had been given some years before. In the year 1544, his son, also Thomas Hobson, exchanged the Marylebone property with the King for some church lands, thus making it royal property. Here in the reign of King Henry VIII. was erected a splendid manor house. It stood on the south side of Marylebone Road, on the site now occupied by the Devonshire Mews, and was occasionally used by Queen Elizabeth and Queen Mary as a royal palace on account of the fine hunting to be had in Marylebone forest.

In the year 1583 Queen Bess granted a lease of the manor of Tyburn, or Marylebourne, to one Edward Forset, gentleman, for twenty-one years, at the yearly rental of £16 11s. 8d.—a very cheap little piece of property! “Edward Forset, gentleman,” seems to have been an amusing person, determined to be great, and found a “county family.” Doubtless he intended to purchase the manor outright eventually for himself and heirs, by the pompous inscription he caused to be erected in the old Parish Church of St. Mary’s, and which still exists intact on the front pew in the Parish Chapel; only a trifle defaced by the coat of paint lavished on it by a well-meaning, but indiscriminating forefather of Marylebone. It runs as follows:—

“These pews inscribd and tan in sunder,
In stone thers graven what is under,
To wit: a valt for burial there is,
Which Edward Forset built for him and his.”

A stern divine, the Rev. John Trusler, who wrote in 1824, makes a severe comment on poor Edward Forset’s little conceit. He says: “By the orthography of which, and its wretched metre, we are taught the folly and

vanity of mankind, in immortalising their names at the loss of their good sense and reputation." The human nature in old records is infinite! But poor Edward Forset was doomed to vacate the manor, and "him and his" are now only remembered by their quaint challenge to Time to obscure their glory.

In the year 1611, after the manor had passed through the hands of one Robert Conquest, it again came into the Forset family, and then passed into that of Austen, Arabella Forset marrying Thomas Austen. In 1710 it was purchased by the Duke of Newcastle from the Austens, and the duke's only daughter married Edward Harley, Earl of Oxford and Mortimer, from whom we get the names Harley Street, Oxford Street, and Mortimer Street.

Robert Harley, of Brampton Bryan, in Herefordshire, was the first collector of the celebrated Harleian MSS., which now form one of the most valuable collections in the Library of the British Museum. It was in the latter part of the seventeenth century that this wonderful treasure was slowly piled up by the great and patient man who so passionately loved his self-set task, and who was afterwards so amply recognised by his country. In the year 1700 he was chosen Speaker of the House of Commons, and in 1711 was created Earl of Oxford and Mortimer, and again, five days afterwards, was promoted to the office of Lord High Treasurer of Great Britain. Later on he retired from his public duties and spent the remainder of his life in increasing and arranging his wonderful library, not sparing any expense. He employed many persons to purchase manuscripts for him abroad, and by these means his library in 1721 increased to nearly 6,000 books.

In 1724 he died, and was succeeded by his son Edward, the second Earl, who followed his noble example and devoted life and fortune to the gathering of the store. In 1741 this good man died also, and

the library became the property of his daughter and heiress, Margaret ; then no longer Margaret Harley, but Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Portland, wife of the Duke of Portland. The British Museum was instituted in the year 1753, and it was then that the great Harleian Library was purchased of the Duke and Duchess by the country for the sum of £10,000.

The first librarian, or, as the epitaph says, "Library Keeper," to have charge of the manuscripts, under the first two Earls of Oxford, was one Master Humphrey Wanley, who lies buried under the threshold stone of the present Parish Chapel. His inscription is carved in slate, and is still clear and readable in spite of the hundreds of feet which have passed and re-passed over it on their way to worship, since the year 1726, when he laid down his pen and horn spectacles, and after his long and dusty labours became dust himself.

One can picture a faded, parchment-like old gentleman in a snuff-coloured coat and dust-coloured wig, with a quill behind his ear, and unspeakable knowledge behind the wig, lying quietly down under that old church door stone to await the reward of those who have done their work well.

CHAP. III.—THE MARYLEBONE GARDENS: THEIR RISE.

WE now emerge from the mists and vapours of mere guesswork and tradition, and enter into a period of our borough's history about which something definite is known, and of which traces are all around us—namely, the eighteenth century—that barbarous, cultured, primæval, effete age, so gloriously pagan, and so quaintly polite: whose be-satined, be-frilled, embroidered gallants were splashed with the blood of duels, endless and causeless; whose women, according to Reynolds, looked like angels, but drank beer at breakfast, and used odd language, and rarely, if ever, washed their hair—an age when houses were exquisite but insanitary; when manners were something too stately and resplendent to be imagined, but morals conspicuous by their absence; when everyone went to church as a matter of course, but snored all the time—also as a matter of course; when women intrigued, betted, gambled, scandled, flirted, and thought the sun went round the earth, and were triumphantly unable to spell, but yet looked most charming and intellectual and refined; when men drank, fought, cheated at cards, bullied, flattered, and over-dressed, and were really not gentlemen according to a modern standard; and who are yet held up to this generation as models of all that is stately, gallant, and charming, not without some truth! Truly an age of paradoxes!

We are drearier now; less dramatic. Knowledge has made us less daring and more dull. There is no doubt, according to many antiquarians, that we are larger, better built, better developed people than they were, according to the deductions to be drawn from the tiny low rooms they lived in, the dresses they wore, and the armour and accoutrements in which they carried on those eternally long wars of theirs. But we are

sadder, with all our wisdom, and less capable of greatness. Their intellectual great men were giants to our twentieth century pigmies. Their women had a charm, a grace, a tenderness, a beauty of expression, according to the old portraits, which one rarely sees in the hard eyes of a present day crowd of London ladies. They had a secret we have not—*i.e.*, whatever their follies, they *lived*. We exist.

Just about the time that the great Robert Harley was beginning his collection, there was a great inrush of French Protestants into the country, and many of these poor hunted Huguenots settled in and about Marylebone. Here they built a church, called the French Chapel, supposed to stand not far from Marylebone Lane, and portrayed by Hogarth in his picture, entitled "Noon," in which he takes off French manners and customs.

About two decades after the arrival of these French exiles, some of the fields of Marylebone Park were planned out into a pleasure ground for the use of the people, and were for some years called the French Gardens; it is supposed on account of their nearness to the French Chapel. Perhaps because the elastic-spirited French exiles were first among their patrons. In 1661 the wicked old philosopher, Pepys, wrote: "Then we went abroad to Marrow-bone" (note the spelling), "and there walked in the garden; the first time I was ever there, and a pretty place it is."

These gardens stood, as most people are aware, on the space now covered by Devonshire Place, Beaumont Street, and Devonshire Street, and were bounded by a wooden fence, closely boarded, according to an old print dated 1750. They were at first quite quaint and countrified, and not used as public pleasure gardens at all, but merely as local bowling greens.

So far as can be ascertained, their boundary was limited by the top end of what is now Beaumont Street, on the north, and by somewhere below Weymouth Street

on the south ; on the east by what is now Harley Street, and on the west by a rail running a little behind the present row of houses and shops which form one side of High Street.

An old print of 1740 shows a straggling row of small cottages about opposite the present Parish Chapel, but further away from it than the now existing shops, thus making High Street rather wider than it is at the present day. Behind these straggling cottages came the fence of the gardens. Legend says that the trees were particularly beautiful, tall, and thickly foliated ; and there are still stories extant of the splendour of the Marylebone roses, and the luxuriance of its fruit orchards.

The gardens were to some degree a place of public amusement when Pepys wrote about them, and it is thought that they developed into properly known and advertised public pleasure grounds in the year 1718, when the following announcement appeared in the "Daily Courant": "This is to give notice to all persons of quality, ladies and gentlemen, that there have been illuminations in Marylebone bowling greens on His Majesty's birthday every year since his happy accession to the throne: the same is (for this time) put off until Monday next, and will be performed into a *consort* of musick, in the middle green, by reason there is a ball in the gardens at Kensington, with Richmond also."

In 1738, Mr. Gough, the then proprietor, enlarged the Gardens, built an orchestra, and issued silver tickets, at twelve shillings each for the season, each ticket admitting two persons. There is no record of the exact limitation of this "season." It seems that previous to the year 1737, all ranks of people could enter the Gardens at any time, free of charge, but that after Mr. Gough's management commenced the place became the rage as a place of resort for jaded London dandies and beauties, and the above price was charged. By and by, the company becoming more select still, Mr. Gough determined to

make the prices still more prohibitive, and accordingly a shilling admittance was charged for a lady and gentleman together, or sixpence for a single person. An advertisement in a contemporary newspaper of the time sent forth a bitter wail to the fops of the day, praying them not to smoke in the flower walks!

The Gardens were arranged in the form of a square, containing in about the centre (rather nearer to the west) a large open space, oblong in shape, called the Grand Walk. This space was planted with a long avenue of beautiful trees, meeting overhead, in a natural archway, each tree having an oil lamp fixed into its trunk, about seven feet from the ground. On either side of this walk were latticed alcoves; and on the right-hand of the walk (supposing one to be looking north), stood the orchestra, a large bow-fronted affair, very decorative, with stone balustrades, and supported by columns. Here sat the musicians making divine harmonies, according to the old pictures, mainly with strings. Below, on the gravelled walk, paraded a fine company of brocaded and bewigged gallants and ladies, flirting, laughing, posing, chattering, sneering, rapturizing, and pretending, just like any other crowd before or since.

On the left-hand side (looking north) of this walk, stood a large room or assembly hall, with a handsome array of columns at its base, forming a kind of covered arcade for promenaders in wet weather. Here were held balls, routs, concerts, and sometimes Shakespearean lectures, the latter being given in 1774, by Dr. William Kenrick, a well-known author of his day. The character of Sir John Falstaff, as represented by this gentleman, was tremendously popular with the high-bred and dainty ladies who came in crowds to hear him.

Elaborate fire-works were one of the principal attractions of the place, and concerts, followed after by balls, the whole, including refreshments, costing but two-and-six for two persons, were considered supremely fashionable.

So great had the fame of the Gardens become, that all forms of rough characters, thieves, and rogues, and vagabonds, footpads and highwaymen, made their precincts a nightly resort, with a view to plundering the visitors on their return to their City homes. These engaging gentlemen were in no way averse to murdering the returning revellers on any of the dark and desolate roads between Marylebone and the City should chance favour them ; and being quite desperate, savage, and afraid of nobody, they often succeeded in this pleasant design, no one, except doubtless the sufferers, taking the tragedy very seriously. However, the road became in time so thickly infested with cut-throats, that the Manager at the Gardens found it expedient to provide a Horse Patrol to protect the gallant company along to the City Road, to and from the Gardens, and the existence of this patrol used to be advertised in the ball or concert handbills, to reassure the timid that they might, with luck, reach home after the revels, alive and whole.

After Mr. Gough's management came that of Mr. John Trusler, a far-seeing worthy, who in 1751 became the sole proprietor of the place. His son produced the first "burletta" that was ever performed there ; and in 1759, his daughter, an enterprising and energetic damsel, suggested that he should open the Gardens for breakfasting, she, with her own fair hands, providing the breakfasts.

This was accordingly done, the gardens opening at six o'clock, and it soon became "the mode" for all "persons of quality" to breakfast there in the fine summer weather, fondly imagining themselves to be Arcadian and simple.

That dear old century was nothing if not posing as Arcadian ! One can see the rank and fashion of the day flocking in to those rural, but modish, breakfasts. Coquettes—jaded faces, worn and lined with late revelings, rouged, daubed, patched beauties, whose every finger was stiff with gaudy rings, whose every speech was stiff with naïve falsities, whose feet were pinched into tight,

tottering high-heeled shoes, whose souls were pinched into cynic formulas, worldly maxims, coarse jokes, strange unwomanly things that caused in a succeeding century a reaction so intense that England was plunged for fifty years into Victorian puritanics. Gallants—old, tired, greedy, sardonic, covered with satin and lace, and crimes and follies, painted red and white, patched, wigged, and dressed out, sneering at most things, with a deep knowledge of all that need not be known, and a complete and sublime ignorance of all that elevates and enlarges—these pathetic creatures, like so many faded marionettes, parading about in the fresh morning air, when the dew was wet on the roses, and shimmering on the grass, and calling themselves “Corydon,” and “Phyllis,” and “Strephon” and “Ariadne,” and anything else off a Watteau vase, their notion of all primæval simplicity.

But Mistress Trusler was sincere enough and did things well—particularly the making of cakes, cheese cakes, seed cakes, plum cakes, and fruit tarts, and so became the presiding deity, or goddess, at those early morning breakfasts with great *éclat*.

In a quaint advertisement of hers which appeared in the newspapers, she mentions her attainments, modestly calling herself “Mr. Trusler’s daughter,” and assuring the world in general that her fruit tarts for breakfast are all made of the best fruit, “always fresh-gathered, having great quantities in the garden. None but loaf-sugar used and the finest Epping butter.” Later on she exhorts those patrons who require tarts of a special size or shape to “bring their dish, or the size of it, and the same shall be made to fit.” So that occasionally they were a trifle Arcadian in all sincerity, if one can believe it possible for a bedecked gallant or coquette to arrive carrying the dish for the special pie!

This tells of the gardens in their glory: my next chapter will deal with their fall from public favour.

CHAP. IV.—MARYLEBONE GARDENS: THEIR FALL.

THE saddest paradox in the world is the fact that every great human movement is in its own essence capable of and inevitably doomed to self-caricature, in the course of a decade or two; but if it were not so, social evolution would be an impossibility. This grim force is constantly, in the space of a few centuries, over-turning and re-dressing entire social systems, habits, religions, fashions, even crimes: nothing escapes its reforming zeal. And the agents, though unconscious, of this constantly working reform, its prophets, priests and expounders, are the vulgar: so that we are sure of its continuance, these being always with us.

Francis of Assisi, himself a talented, unselfish, sincere social reformer, has been parodied repeatedly by many a weak-headed egotist, who felt saintly when saying a few beads, and chose to hide his general incapacity for work in the world of men under a brown habit. The revival of purer and classic art in the Italy of the 16th century, has finally caricatured itself in the Italian art of the present day; no doubt, the first Quaker bonnet on a beautiful dimpled Quaker face was enchanting, but its later form, its spectre, the Victorian "poke," was fatal. The mighty movement towards raising the standard of English taste and ethics, made by such giants as Ruskin, Rossetti, F. Madox Brown, and Holman Hunt, carries with it, along with its glory, the solemn blame for many a hand-painted mirror adorned with happily impossible bulrushes, many an Aspinall's enamelled palm-leaf screen, and many a terrific photograph frame, in the otherwise peaceful homes of England,

Looking back over dear old Marylebone Gardens at this distance of time, one sighs to think for how short a span were they charming, unspoilt and rural, before the great wave of vulgarity rushed over and engulfed them.

Only the foregoing thought that this order of things is an essential part of the great social plan can console us to whom they are lost : so peaceful, fresh and innocent, in the days of Pepys, so that even he could speak nothing but good of them : so really pastoral, serene, and unspoiled, when the first lovely London ladies found them out and used to gather for the freshening breezes, the sight of roses, and the scent of new-mown hay.

When conversation was the only amusement, and that highly classic and learned and refined ; or lectures, or choice open-air concerts of Purcell or Haydn or "Mr. Handel," as he was then called ; mainly on rather thin strings, the always half-sad melodies of those days floating vaguely and delicately through the summer dusk. These were days to dream of : those are sweet, serene and lovely ghosts—which, if ghosts walk, we hope still hover round Devonshire Place and Beaumont Street ; gentle shades of the good and gracious, the lovely and the learned, who "in gloss of satin and glimmer of pearl," could strike no terror into the most timid were they to be met on a moonlight All Hallow E'en.

But by and bye, the enterprising built a concert hall, an orchestra, an arcade, and a theatre, an assembly-room for balls, and planned out a grand parade. Then Rank and Fashion, who had found out that the choice spirits of the great world came hither to sincerely ruralize, came too ; and, alas ! with their advent the charm went. Instead of the graceful *précieuses*, the wits and the blue-stockings, came dandies and female fashion-mongers. Where once that "conversation," so beloved of Dr. Johnson, the play of soul to soul, flowed on so freely, now mean, witless, spiteful banter held the day. Where once women dressed simply and charmingly, they now dressed with a simplicity which cost them five sleepless nights a week to plan : for the roses Marylebone could call up in the cheeks of pale London ladies, red rouge arrived ; for the classic concert was substituted the "rout," for the airy minuet on the

grass lawn at dusk, the hot, crowded ball in bad atmosphere, and the smell of flaring candle-grease ; for the literary lecture, the coarse licentious play—and all gay London was in Marylebone, and its fairy charm was gone for ever.

Fashion came, and in its train its parasites—the pander, the sharper, the rogue, the gambler, followed in their due degree by the spy, the pickpocket, the cut-throat and the assassin. Fortune-tellers, sooth-sayers, “witches,” horoscope readers, card-sharppers, jesters, idlers, and vagabonds of all kinds came seething in, like the rats in the “Pied Piper”: the carnival, the rout, the masquerade, took the place of more sober joys: stupendous displays of fireworks became a nightly treat, and tawdry lamps and festoons decorated (?) the lovely avenue of tall and beautiful trees along the Grand Walk.

The population of the district around the Gardens now rapidly increased. Herds of queer characters of all kinds flooded into the sleepy Marylebone cottages, and over-flowed its lodging accommodations, so that new houses were rapidly built, and the place grew from a little dainty village into a noisy disordered sort of mushroom town.

There is a candid reference to Marylebone at the time of which I write, about 1770, in Combe’s “Dr. Syntax,” which is rather interesting in this connection. The supposed-to-be unsophisticated old country clergyman and philosopher, Dr. Syntax, takes up his quarters in “Mary-bonne,” while on a journey in search of a wife. His friend Vellum, a publisher and learned “man about town,” warned him in the following lines :

“Where’er you be there must be good,
 Whatever be the neighbourhood,
 But ’tis a region let me say,
 Where you, Sir, would not wish to stay.”

So that, apparently, Marylebone was considered a

highly unlikely place for a clerical philosopher in search of a wife to find one.

From becoming the resort of Fashion in search of excitement, the Gardens gradually descended to a general meeting place for mere rowdyism and criminality. One by one the "persons of quality" ceased to frequent them. The roughs who nightly assembled there, robbed, insulted, and jostled all well-dressed visitors; accidents constantly occurred from the fireworks, which were carelessly managed, and a party of idle but desperate fellows tore down the decorations and injured the stage. In 1774 the public press made serious complaints against the managers, who on one occasion charged five shillings entrance fee for a *Fête Champêtre* which was really nothing more than a few tawdry festoons and a few extra lamps. Still, things got worse and worse. The magistrates were besieged with complaints from respectable inhabitants and law-loving folk, and finally, in 1778, the Gardens were suppressed utterly, and the site let out to builders.

There is still extant an old deed of assignment conveying the property in Marylebone Gardens belonging to Thomas Lowe to certain trustees, for the benefit of his creditors, in which our Borough is alluded to as "the town of Saint Marylebone, *alias* Marybone." It seems rather a pity the word "Saint" in the title of the place has been lost, as it is uncommon and archaic, and is in itself a proof of the antiquity of the town. *Apropos*, the Marylebone Vestry and Infirmary seem determined not to let the old name die out, those substantial institutions on their stationery, etc., being always officially subscribed Saint Mary-le-bone.

Shortly before the gardens closed (in 1778), a spring was discovered within their limits, which was christened the Marylebone Spa; the waters of which were supposed to be good for the digestion and to promote a good appetite. Hither came people in search of health at six

o'clock in the morning. A quaint old pump, by many people believed to be the last remaining trace of this Spa, still stands in the out-buildings behind the premises of Mr. S. Drewell, in Weymouth Street. By some happy chance it has not gone the way of most old and interesting relics, but has survived the intruding tide of buildings, and though hidden from all but its owners, still exists.

This is the tale of the Gardens. They had a brief and boisterous career, and though once Arcadian, came to an untimely end. The good historian never moralizes and should be utterly devoid of a sense of humour ; but perhaps the mere sentimental scribbler may be allowed to shed a ghostly tear for those dear forgotten Gardens, which, if only the entire universal social order of things had been different, might still exist to some extent in quaint façade and stone spring, lichen crowned, as a monument of a great dim Past in the midst of that sea of rampant vulgarity, which we are nevertheless constrained to admit is necessary, and Progress.

About all that is left to us are a Church and a Pump. The Pump is hidden in a stable, the Church in a little dark burying-ground, behind rusty iron railings, and crowds pass by and think it a disused school-house. They are oddly symbolic relics—the fount of pure living water, and the House of God, the abode of Christian idealism ; two solitary things which have escaped a century and a half of change and chaos ; two things, which either too necessary or too unimportant for the vandal to destroy, cast a little ray of hope on the present prospect of progressing Humanity.

CHAP. V.—THE TAVERNS AND TYBURN.

REFORMERS occasionally overlook details in a manner rather astonishing to the puppets they move until one remembers that this *trait* is an absolute essential to the character of a reformer: if he did not do this, he would give things up. One would not set an entomologist to sweep a kitchen for fear he should be tempted to consult the individual sensations of every stray cricket on the hearth. A reformer necessarily sees things broadly, on a vast scale only; which is his strength—and, alas! also his weakness.

They took poor Marylebone and tidied it up by clearing away its Gardens in all good faith: they let them out in building lots, and built solemn houses and streets on their site. It was a sweeping reform, and perfectly serious in intention, but it managed to miss the corners; for that anything but goodly company whose rioting had spoilt the Gardens, instead of leaving Marylebone for “pastures new,” simply dispersed into the neighbouring taverns and way-side inns; so setting up in the place a series of noisy resorts and meeting-places having no restrictions, instead of only one which was at least under the eye of the metropolis. Consequently those old bowery places, all roses and clipped hedges, and sweet stocks and thyme, which formed the grounds to the quaint way-side inns or hostels of Marylebone, became meeting places for all the rabble thrown out of the Gardens; and in the course of a very few years, the scenes of bear-baiting, cock-fighting, paid duels, boxing and prize-fighting of the lowest and most brutal kind. These attended, of course, by their usual accompaniments, gambling, vice, intemperance and all unloveliness. Fights between women—giant women, “amazons” and what not, were publicly advertised at some of these taverns, and crowds came to see the revolting sights: so that Marylebone seemed very little better off than it

had been ; in some respects rather worse. The Gardens, at any rate, had had a managing committee, which, however casual and dreamy, was necessarily some check on the proceedings : but the taverns were without even the irresponsible guidance of gentlemen like Mr. Gough and his friends, and soon went to far worse lengths than anything in the Gardens. Each landlord ran his inn for what he could get out of it, and was permitted to do so without censure from anyone.

Most of these tavern gardens had been bowling-greens for many a long year, and had, until that time, attracted only the self-respecting followers of that good old English game—genial, delicious old philosophers, or merry, honest, sturdy youths, all joining together on long still summer evenings in the healthy flinging of the great wooden balls, or planking down their modest stakes between the lazy whiffs of their pipes : pleasant evenings, when the “click, click” of the bowls fell lightly on the hushed air and mingled with the laugh of those fine good-humoured old Marylebone gentlemen, as their mellow tobacco mingled with the wafted scents of mignonette and musk.

Here had been wont to meet in perfect good fellowship the duke, the dandy, the grave-digger, the merchant, the apprentice, the apothecary, and perhaps—who knows?—the parson. He was, let us hope, a philosopher, that old Rector of Marylebone, for in the year 1650 his stipend was only £15 per annum, with about as much again in emoluments ! He must have been glad of an occasional quiet smoke in the bowling-green, if only to drive away his cares.

Of course, one or two of these taverns had had no very good reputation long before the Gardens became notorious, but the majority of them were sleepy, quiet, country inns of the old type, used only by travellers. “The Rose,” which was situated at the top end of what is now High Street, and stood pretty much on the site

of the present Girls' Schools, was a fairly noted gaming place for persons of rank even in the 17th century, and is mentioned in the *London Gazette*, 1691, in such a connection. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu also writes:—"Some dukes at Marylebone bowl time away": and another writer (in 1699) mentions one or two of the Marylebone taverns as not being quite above suspicion. "The Rose of Normandy" stood very close to "The Rose;" and the bowling-greens of both these taverns were incorporated into the Gardens when they first started.

"The Queen's Head and Artichoke" was another beautiful old inn, which, after the Gardens closed, became notorious for its evil company.

"The Yorkshire Stingo" was a very famous place, indeed, celebrated for its Yorkshire ale—hence its odd name. It stood opposite Lisson Grove on the south side of Marylebone Road, and had particularly lovely gardens. It is shown in one of the illustrations in Combe's "Dr. Syntax," written about that time, and is evidently considered a typical place of resort for roughs and sharpers by the writer: for it is here that Dr. Syntax meets some very odd characters in connection with a horse fair.

"The Farthing Pie House," another famous tavern, stood on the St. Pancras side of Marylebone, practically on the boundary line of the two parishes.

"The Jew's Harp," a very picturesque old place, stood in what is now Regent's Park, about a mile north of Portland Place. Possibly it was somewhat too far out of Marylebone to attract the London loafers, for it seems to have kept up its quiet and rural reputation even after the influx of the weird brotherhood of the Gardens.

But "The Rose," "The Rose of Normandy," "The Queen's Head and Artichoke," "The Yorkshire Stingo," and "The Farthing Pie House," became amazingly famous for all that was wild, disorderly, and utterly destructive of all social peace or comfort. Other and

smaller taverns rose into existence and bad fame, and the few red-tiled, white-washed cottages which went straggling along in the vague form of a country lane, very sketchy indeed, became interspersed with other cottages and small houses and rapidly grew into High Street—a baby High Street which we should find it hard to recognize now! Charminglly casual mottled pigs strolled about its grassy furrows; easy-looking, comfortable geese cackled airily about its environs, if one may judge from an old print of that part of the century.

Lisson Grove—then Lisson Fields—became infested with professional robbers, who simply waited there to rob and murder any passing travellers: Hampstead Heath, as we all know, was a happy hunting-ground for highwaymen and cut-throats: Primrose Hill had its share of tragedies: and the fields between what is now Oxford Street and Marylebone were scenes of nightly bloodshed. Rioting became quite common, and the fearful amount of strong beer drunk by the lower classes, combined with their utter ignorance, savagery, and uncared-for state, made a London crowd in those days as furious, brutal, and terrible as a French revolutionary mob. Marylebone did not escape these evils, which, indeed, existed in all thickly-populated places in that century: and we, who talk of “good old days” and of the fearful degeneration of the present age, would do well not to study the social history and contemporary literature of less than a hundred and fifty years back, unless we want to feel rather small. It was nice to be so picturesque, but it must also have been distinctly bad for the nerves. Of course you cannot have everything.

As an illustration of the great social principle of supply and demand, the ever famous gallows, Tyburn Tree, or “Deadly Never-Green,” as it was called, now sprang into fashion more than ever before. It was the place of execution for all Middlesex criminals, and as

the criminal law was at that period almost as savage, unreasoning, and brutal as the wretchedly ill-taught people, it plied a merry trade.

Hogarth, who was a Marylebone gentleman, has left us a deathless picture of Tyburn and a Tyburn crowd in his series "The Idle Apprentice. It became the fashion to crowd in thousands to see a poor miserable fellow-creature hanged; gentle ladies, or what heaven originally intended for such, came in their best to see this thing, perhaps themselves a more awful spectacle of degradation—the degradation of the heart and mind and soul—than the poor wretch who only came to pay the penalty of his, perhaps ignorant, blind, almost inevitable misdeeds. All the dandies came, and all the roughs; the rich and the poor; the learned and the unlettered. Happily some of the scenes enacted on those fiendish gala days pass the limit of our imagination; we may rest content only to know that every evil passion ran riot and every kind of coarseness held the day. People paid for their seats at these shows, and the prices were regulated according to the degree of criminality, or else the social position of the poor miserable felon.

The gallows was a vast wooden structure, three-square, and supported by three stilts. It stood on the site of what is now Connaught Place, and Park Lane was called Tyburn Lane, and Oxford Street Tyburn Road, on its account. It had stood there doing its grim duty long before the time of which I now write, and had supported its terrible fame for many years, since, when in the reign of Henry VIII. it had cast into eternity the Holy Maid of Kent, and many other persons of note; in the reign of Elizabeth also, the famous and brilliant Jesuit, Robert Southwell, executed for alleged conspiracy against the Government, but by many Catholics believed to have been a saint, and not without strong reason. Queen Henrietta Maria, the wife of Charles I.,

is said to have walked there barefoot through Hyde Park to do penance. One cannot help thinking the Queen must have had a great many things on her conscience, to walk "without sock or brogue" from Whitehall to Connaught Place, especially in the then state of the roads!

When Charles II. was reinstated on the throne of his fathers, the bodies of Cromwell, Ireton, and Bradshaw were dragged from their graves in Westminster Abbey and hanged on Tyburn Tree, at its three corners, in their grave clothes, from sunrise to sunset. They were then taken down and beheaded, their bodies buried beneath the gallows, and their heads set upon poles on the top of Westminster Hall. A brilliant woman once said, "Count no man great till his effigy is smashed." Cromwell, whose tomb was thus ravaged and desecrated, must then be considered to have reached the altitude of greatness.

The criminal law was catholic in its methods. At this deadly tree, for instance, suffered in their turn John Felton, for murdering a duke; Okey, Barkstead, and Corbet, for signing, with fifty-six others, the death-warrant of their king (Charles I.); Thomas Sadler, for stealing the Lord Chancellor's mace and purse; the Archbishop of Armagh, for imagined treason; and one Sir Thomas Armstrong, for complicity in the Rye House Plot; again, one John Smith, for burglary, which gentleman hung by the neck for half-an-hour and still did not die, so was reprieved and came to himself, and one presumes lived burglariously ever after. Here the great highwayman, Jack Sheppard, was hanged; also another celebrated reprobate of the same stamp, called John Rann, who, strangely enough, had foretold throughout his violent career that he would be hanged eventually in the month of November—he was executed on November 30th, 1774. Here, too, suffered Dr. Dodd for forgery; and the last woman who suffered death in England for a political offence, an old dame named Elizabeth Gaunt, was burned

to death at Tyburn for harbouring in her house a person concerned in the Rye House Plot. John Austen was the last man to be hanged at Tyburn, in 1783, after which date it was pulled down and all criminals executed at Newgate.

The hangmen were given $13\frac{1}{2}d.$ per head for their wages, and were considered persons of quality, the one who followed Derrick, the hangman of James the First's reign, being created an Esquire and given Arms, on account of his office. His name was Gregory Brandon. He was followed by Dun, who in his turn gave place to Jack Ketch, the last and most famous Tyburn hangman, whose name still stands for that gloomy profession.

CHAP. VI.—THE CHURCHES.

WE often hear of the "Mother" Church of a parish or district, but very rarely of a "Grandmother" Church, yet Marylebone possesses such an ecclesiastical relation. The Mother Church—Marylebone Parish Church—is so large and imposing a person, and her offspring so very numerous and fine, that the little shabby grandmother has retired long ago into the background. She is a quiet, soberly garbed, plain little old lady, and has a quaint, dim, forgotten little churchyard all to herself, at the top end of the High Street. She is now called the Parish Chapel, and it is so long ago since she bore any other title that people have practically forgotten that she was ever the Parish Church. She is very conservative, prim, and dignified—she keeps her high pews, her Commandments placed over the altar, her little odd "cornery" galleries, her sober wall tablets setting forth the correct civic and social virtues of the long-forgotten 18th century dead. She even grows specially umbrageous shady trees in her still graveyard, just as some dear retiring old lady will be found to have the secret of growing particularly fine musk in the window of a dim old room, ghostly with miniatures and *pot-pourri*.

In a former chapter, I gave a full account of the first Marylebone Church, St. John's, Tybourne, on the site of the old Court House, also the building of the new church of 1400, re-christened St. Mary-atte-the-Bourne, on the site of the present Parish Chapel, High Street, served and owned by the Monks of St. Lawrence de Blakemore's Priory, Essex, up to the period of the Reformation.

I now give an outline of its history from that date. King Henry VIII., suppressing the Priory, took Marylebone Church and gave it to Wolsey, who made it subservient to Ipswich. When the Cardinal fell into disgrace, the Crown again took possession, finally granting it to Thomas Reve and George Cotton as sole

proprietors and patrons. It then passed to the Forsets, who married into the Portland family, who were its patrons for years. In the year 1740 the old building of 1400 became finally and hopelessly ruinous and was pulled down, a new Church being erected immediately on its site, which was completed in 1742. That building was identically the same as the present Parish Chapel. This extremely ugly, tiny, primitive little sanctuary did duty as the sole Parish Church of Marylebone from 1742 to 1818, incredible as it may seem to those who realize that, at the end of the 18th century, Marylebone was a large and fast-growing town of 70,000 souls. A picturesquely worded complaint was wailed forth in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in the year 1807, by a gentleman who was justly horrified at the fearful want of space, dignity, or decency, which was the inevitable result of its cramped dimensions. He says, after stating that he visited Marylebone Church by chance, and his belief that it was the smallest Church of England place of worship in London, "there is no font for baptism, no room for depositing dead bodies on tressels in the usual way, no aisle to contain them. They are placed in the most indecent manner on the pews. At the time I visited this scandal to our church and nation, there were no fewer than five corpses placed in the manner described; eight children with their sponsors, &c., waiting to be christened, and five women to be churched; all within these contracted dimensions." This gentleman goes on to state that, in place of a font, a "common basin" was placed on the Communion Table, and the children, who apparently were none of them babies, ranged round to be baptized, their sponsors and parents lolling about in utter disorder in the few pews disengaged by coffins! A terrible picture of the indifference, carelessness, and sloth of the clergy of those days.

Lord Byron was baptized at this Church, presumably out of the above-mentioned "common basin"; possibly

with similar accompaniments—an unromantic beginning! *Apropos*, numbers of zealous Americans who visit England in the summer, come to this Church to see Byron's font, only to be disappointed, as there is, of course, none to show; one lady in particular, who visited it last summer, resplendent in waving veil and noisy silk skirts, did not wait to hear the tale of the basin, but fiercely upbraided "you Eng-lish" for utter lack of a love for the past, utter vandalism, and utter want of all appreciation of relics. "You've no reverence," she said, "like we have. Why, I came here on purpose miles and miles to see that font, *and never a chip of it can I take home after all*, and such a good sum as it would have fetched over the Pond!" Such is reverence.

Evidently the absurdly small church became a crying scandal in Marylebone, for in 1810 we find plans well on foot for five chapels-of-ease to be built. How few people know that the present Parish Church was first intended for a chapel-of-ease to what is now the Parish Chapel! In 1813 the foundation of this chapel-of-ease was laid, but in 1814 the work of building was suddenly stopped and the designs entirely altered and revised, and instead of a chapel-of-ease the Vestry determined to build a new Parish Church. A more extended portico and steeple were introduced, and all the original plans submitted by Mr. Nash entirely put aside for the designs of Mr. Thomas Hardwicke, a pupil of Sir William Chambers,—and so came our present Parish Church.

In 1818 the church was finished, and on the 4th of February in that year was consecrated and formally opened as a Parish Church. The old Parish Church was, on the same day, formally converted into a chapel-of-ease, her east doors blocked up, her ponderous "three-decker" divided into a pulpit and reading-desk separately, and her organ placed at the west end of the church, instead of over the Altar as originally placed, and still to be seen in Hogarth's "Industrious Apprentice at Church," who is

supposed to be worshipping within Marylebone Church, while his comrade, the "Idle Apprentice," is represented in the next picture playing dice outside.

The Parish Church that we know is not the thing it was then, for which let us offer devout thanks. The exterior was always imposing, but Marylebone has its present Rector, the Rev. Canon Barker, to thank for the now beautiful and dignified interior, he having entirely altered and restored it at enormous cost, and made it what it is. Those of us who know nothing of its early ugliness, can perhaps hardly realize the unspeakable benefit this tremendous work of our Rector has been to the parish, but when we are dead and gone it will be remembered by others.

But in 1818 they were really, artistically speaking, irreclaimable. They were the most dangerous thing one can be—perfectly self-satisfied. The victory of Waterloo, perhaps, had turned some of their heads; they felt that England—Albion they called it—ruled the world; that she could henceforth be a law unto herself, especially in Church architecture, and give tips to the builders of the ancient Cathedrals, and patronize such nonentities as mere classics.

There were two galleries, one above the other, round the Church, private boxes like theatre boxes, with fire-places and curtains, close up to the Altar. The pulpit was a beautiful example of carving in that somewhat impossible material, mahogany; and there was a fine "Nativity," by West, over the Communion Table. A terrific transparency—a painting on gauze—was let into the middle of the organ, which was placed over the Altar. True, it, too, was by Sir Benjamin West, the President of the Royal Academy, who ought to have known better, and it cost a pretty penny, but its fearful mis-proportions, its noisy colouring, and its entirely un-ecclesiastical style, made it a horror. It represented the Angel appearing to the Shepherds. In 1826 it was

taken down and stowed away in the crypt of the Church, from whence it was either stolen or spirited away, for all trace of it is lost. There was a heavy mahogany screen behind the Altar, and crimson velvet draperies were festooned casually on to most things, like so many antimacassars.

An impossible moment for architectural art, the "teens" of the 19th century! A terrible epoch, when England was tossing between desperate conservatism and fierce socialistic upheavals; when she was grimly true to all that was false in art, and prodigally false to all that was true. A period when she swept away ruthlessly beautiful old Tudor houses to build in their stead vulgar imitations of "classic." When lovely old oak window-seats, things to dream of, went out of fashion to make room for more "genteel" mahogany chairs with black horsehair seats, and wax fruit under bell-glasses! A coloured picture of the Parish Church interior in the early "twenties" can be seen still in the Vestry of the Church, proving the justice of these statements. In this painting a very pompous, highly self-satisfied looking gentleman in white nankeens and swallow-tails, is represented sailing haughtily along the aisle with a stiff stock round his neck, as though he were pointing to the general hideousness around him and saying from Olympian heights, "See what the British Constitution can do!"

But in this rough outline of the Church's history, I must not omit a brief *résumé* of the Clergy and Rectors of Marylebone.

Far, far back in the days of old St. John's, Tybourne, what crude, pious, shaven monk, supplied by the Abbey of Barking, was their forefather? A gentleman whose Latin *Aves* and exquisite Altar vestments, utter ignorance, and intense good-nature, must have made him generally beloved by his Catholic flock. He is lost in the past. He was followed in turn by the monks of St. Lawrence—"Black Canons" they were called—who were

the first to minister in the first St. Mary-of-the-Bourne, in 1400. They wore black habits and high-pointed cowls, and the officiating Chaplain, or chief of these—the prototype of the later rectors—was called the Minister. His salary, good man, was quite stupendous—it was thirteen shillings a year! Happily, being a monk, he had few wants and much philosophy, but he was not over-paid for all that. These “black” Canons came down one after the other in solemn sable succession, doing their steady obedient duty for their thirteen shillings with never a murmur. Fine examples of a system which has had its day. The last of the “Black Monks” was called Demerick, recorded as the “last Catholic priest” to minister in Marylebone. Then came the Reformation. The first protestant clergy here were the Deans and Canons of Christchurch, then the Masters of Ipswich, and then, under the patronage of the Forsets and Portlands, the following Rectors: Francis Barton, July, 1582; Thomas Moore, July, 1583; John Payton, January, 1585; Robert Powell, June, 1587; Griffin Edwards, December, 1598; Thomas Swadlin, D.D., 1640; Edmund Price, 1664; John Crosbie, 1669; William Rogers (no date given); George Allen, May, 1672; Matthew Brailsford, 1711; Randolph Ford (curate), 1711; Daniel Boote, 1754; Thomas Dyer, 1760; James Parent, 1760; Thomas Foster, 1765; Stephen Deguthon, 1767; J. Baker, 1768; Sambrook Russell, 1768; William Charles Dyer (no date given); The Hon. and Rev. John Harley, Bishop of Hereford, died 1788; the Rev. Sir Richard Kaye, LL.D., Dean of Lincoln, died 1809; the Rev. Luke Heslop, B.D., Archdeacon of Bucks, died 1825; the Rev. John Hume Spry, D.D., Canon of Canterbury, 1854; the Rev. the Hon. G. T. Pelham, late Bishop of Norwich, 1857; the Rev. J. Phipps Eyre, resigned 1882, when he was followed by the Rev. Canon Barker, the present Rector.

It is a curious thing to note in passing, that through all the years recorded here, there has never been a pro-

perly endowed or settled Rectory in connection with Marylebone till the Rectorship of Canon Barker. In 1650 the Rector of Marylebone enjoyed a stipend of £15 per annum, with another £15 in emoluments but with no Rectory. Of course money was of a totally different value in those days, and rent and food were infinitely cheaper, also you wore the same clothes for years. Still, £15 looks very odd to us.

A famous Rector of Marylebone was Dr. Swadlin, mentioned in the foregoing list. When the fierce Civil Wars raged over the land, he was one fine day seized, robbed of his clerical dignities, thrown into prison, and his wife and children turned ruthlessly out of doors to starve. These determined people seem to have clung to a living somehow, for in a year's time, when the poor Rector was released, they all re-assembled, made a new home in Oxford, and Dr. Swadlin there, by hard grinding, got his D.D. degree and set to work to teach for a livelihood. Here he bided his time till the Merry Monarch's Restoration, when he just went to Court in his shabby teacher's gown and asked for Marylebone to be given back to him. He got it, came back, and continued his honourable ministry here as though nothing had happened! A dogged and delightful person indeed. One can picture him a fine old Vicar of Wakefield type of man, with perhaps a more bull-dog style of chin, and a grim-set mouth, and a laugh up his sleeve at his enemies.

Before concluding the history of the Clergy, I must mention the fact that they have had a great many minor troubles to encounter even in the 19th century, one being, in 1832, a stern motion moved by the Vestry that they should not use so much soap in the Church vestry. The gentleman who brought this complaint forward stating that "two cakes of soap were amply sufficient for two clergymen to use in a year"! Another, the fact that until quite recent years no curates were allowed to be subscribers to the Park Square Gardens, they, and dogs

and footmen, being strictly forbidden from entering that paradise. The reasons were purely sentimental, the younger clerics being considered dangerous to the peace of mind of susceptible young ladies, and at the same time quite ineligible. The curates must have consoled themselves by reflecting on the absolutely immense inferential compliment contained in this stern mandate !

CHAP. VII.—MARYLEBONE CELEBRITIES.

HE who sets himself the task of writing one chapter on the bygone celebrities of Marylebone is like a child who tries to confine an ocean in an oyster shell. The attempt is stupendous, superb, idle, and foolish. One requires no sense of humour, and no sense of proportion, and a bland and glorious belief in one's own sufficiency of which even the most stupid are hardly capable. Yet the exigencies of space here demand it to be done. We bow to the laws of local handbooks and here make the attempt—with apologies. Let him who feels inclined to criticize, try to do it himself!

If, out of that array of glorious ghosts of the good, the witty, the lovely, and the wise, we could call back two only, we might have such a book on the subject as would be a history of human nature in itself. If Dickens and Hogarth would step forth from the enfolding shadows of the "land where all things are forgotten," what a making of books that would be! But no echo comes from that (to us) dim world where dwell the deathless dead: where the great and fiercely-bright spirits of men and women, gifted beyond human understanding, circle together like stars in the sight of Him who gave them spirit birth, and created them with all the glories and the passionate sufferings of genius for some high purpose beyond our knowing.

Marylebone-ites know their own traditions so well, especially old Marylebone-ites, that they are quite cross if you allude to them: much less write about them. They answer you shortly, with a little shrug. But the newcomers do not yet know all, and this is for the newcomers, and not for the old residents, to whom an officious upstart raconteur must be distinctly boring.

It is like saying, for instance, that Queen Anne has positively expired, to tell anyone in Marylebone that Dickens lived in the house at the top of High Street called No. 1, Devonshire Terrace. But it is necessary to say so to

fulfil the uses of this chapter. The house has been very little altered, and was the birthplace of nearly all Dickens's most popular works, notably "David Copperfield" and "Dombey and Son." Lord Bacon was married at Marylebone Parish Chapel; Lord Byron was christened there; there also was christened Horatia Nelson, the child of Lord Nelson, brought to the Church by the beautiful but erring Lady Emma Hamilton. The Parish Registers record the little girl's name as "Horatia Nelson Thompson." This unique entry stands alone in the entire omission of the parents' names or occupations.

Queen Elizabeth came here to hunt, the old Manor House which stood at the top of Devonshire Place being used as a Royal hunting lodge, adjoining as it did the forests which then stretched over what is now Regent's Park, away to the lonely tracts and uplands of Hampstead. She must have made a gay picture, dashing off on her cream palfrey, followed by her crowd of cavaliers, attired in a stiffened and jewelled hunting-dress of Lincoln green, with a black peaked hat and waving scarlet feather setting off her wonderful red hair and wicked, foxy, fascinating face with a witch-like effect—a woman who played ping-pong with Europe and moved kings and statesmen like the ivory pawns on a chessboard: witty, spiteful, intrepid, powerful, brilliant, and utterly unscrupulous, she wrought her country and her people "lasting good."

Doctor Johnson, the great lexicographer, the philosopher, the wit, and, as Micklejohn calls him, the mighty turning-point in the literature of his age, the herald of a newer and more powerful school, lived at No. 38, Castle Street. It was in that street, in the house opposite to No. 38, that he was introduced to Sir Joshua Reynolds at the tea party given by two Misses Cotterell, old friends of the great doctor. If the dear old gentleman drank his usual nineteen cups on that occasion, the two ladies must have had their work cut out for them, as Sir Joshua

was also very partial to tea, and usually managed to call on his friends at the witching hour of its brewing. They would be a nice pair to entertain in those primitive days when hostesses made the tea themselves, and boiled the kettle in the "parlour."

A friend of Dr. Johnson's, Mrs. Montagu, the Queen of the Blue-stockings, lived in Portman Square, at the large corner mansion which still stands there, and which she had built herself. She was a well-known literary star of her day, and a clever and voluminous though not a brilliant talker ; her *salons* being a centre for all the great intellectual lights of the times. One room in her house was entirely lined from ceiling to floor with birds' feathers, and it was in reference to this room that Pope wrote :

"The birds put off their every hue
To deck a room for Montagu."

"Bluestocking" is a term which now suggests something so dreadful and ill-dressed and unwomanly that it is only fair to the great founder of that order's memory to mention that she was a past mistress in the art of graceful attire : that she followed the fashions of her day with grace and elegance, and was in no way different to other ladies of position so far as appearance went, except that she generally looked better than they, as she had a tall and handsome figure and walked with a stately gait. She was an imperious woman of fierce party prejudices, and managed to quarrel with a good many friends, notably Dr. Johnson himself, who in the end ceased to be invited to her receptions. The loss was unquestionably hers. However, the old philosopher had his revenge—perhaps unconsciously—for he solemnly uttered one oracular sentence on the subject which has been faithfully recorded : "Mrs. Montagu, sir, has dropped me. Now, sir, there are some people one should like to drop very well, but would not wish to be dropped by"—a crystallized snub which still holds fast to the memory of Elizabeth Montagu,

when her writings and words are forgotten. *Moral*: Do not too lightly drop philosophers.

Another of the same group, Mrs. Thrale, later on Mrs. Piozzi, the dear friend of Johnson for many years, lived at No. 33, Welbeck Street. While last, but not least, James Boswell, the shadow, the adorer, and biographer of Johnson, lived at 122, Great Portland Street. Never was a parasite turned to such perfect use as James Boswell: a little foolish man, of narrow intellect, poor spirit, utter want of all sense of humour, affected, loquacious, and tactless; yet containing behind all this lumber a capacity for passionate devotion, noble self-effacement, and sincere hero-worship which hands him down even to our day as one of the great types of unselfish friendship—a friendship worthy in its own degree to rank with the love of Jonathan. Many and many were the snubs poor Boswell bore in pathetic silence when his great hero had the gout or the dyspepsia, or felt upset with creation generally. Much contumely had he to endure: he was to Johnson what the familiar Dæmon was to Socrates; only instead of being a shadow to lead and instruct, he was a shadow to throw boots at. But he never wavered. Johnson was to him the Ideal embodied, the king among men, the lion (not the bear!), and he patiently plodded away noting down the great sayings that fell from his hero's lips, snubs and all, with an accuracy that is in itself a pathetic proof of his utter self-less devotion.

Turner, "the greatest landscape painter England has ever known," as I think it was Ruskin called him, lived at 64, Harley Street, for many years, and after 1812 at 25, Queen Anne Street (a house built by himself), which has since been replaced by a building numbered 23-24. His style of living was so penurious and so wretched, though he was earning an enormous income, and was an R.A. at the time, that it reads like a Dickens romance. His aged father, a wizened, ragged old man, who had once been a barber in Maiden Lane, seems to have been

his sole servitor, and used to answer the door to the few callers by pulling back a creaking chain, and peering out of the hardly opened portal with a snarling negative to most. The paint on the broken railings was cracked and blistered, the walls were tumbling down, and the whole *ménage* carried on in a squalid and miserable fashion. Turner's extraordinary genius seems to have made him superior to externals in a marked degree. He died in a poor Chelsea cottage, the death of a forgotten pauper, but was folded for his burial in one of his own pictures as a shroud : so says tradition. Thus he lies wrapped in his own glory.

Another great artist, George Romney, lived at 32, Cavendish Square ; and yet another, the great Flaxman, at 7, Buckingham Street ; while Marylebone was the home of hosts of other immortal painters, amongst whom may be cited Allan Ramsay, Sir Edwin Landseer, Sir Benjamin West, and the mighty Hogarth, whom Dickens accounted one of the greatest moralists and social reformers that England has ever known.

Michael Faraday, one of the most famous scientific lights of the nineteenth century, used to play marbles in Spanish Place, where he was employed as errand-boy at a newspaper shop. His father was a blacksmith, who lived in Jacob's Well Mews in Spanish Place. He used to take out his little sister for walks in Manchester Square in his free times, his busy little mind occupying itself continually with all sorts of self-set scientific problems. Later on he got a place as errand-boy to a doctor, where his work was to take round the medicines to the various patients, much to his childish delight. In after years, when he became the centre of the highest circles of scientific thought and discovery, and one of the greatest men in England, he could never hear the clang of an anvil, or the rattling together of metal tools, without going back in imagination to the forge where his father worked in the early scenes of his childhood.

Macready, the actor, lived at No. 1, York Place, and was very friendly with Dickens. Captain Marryat, another friend of the Dickens', lived at 3, Spanish Place, from whence he used to go to No. 1, Devonshire Terrace, and romp with the little Dickens children by the hour.

In Chesterfield Street (No. 1) lived the great Charles Wesley and his beautiful and gifted wife, Sarah Wesley. I am asked to devote an entire chapter to the Marylebone life of this great man by several of his most ardent admirers. I have also been specially requested to devote a whole chapter to Dickens and the Brownings respectively in their connection with Marylebone, hence my omitting these mighty names from the present list.

CHAP. VIII.—THE BROWNINGS IN MARYLEBONE.

BY the request of an American lady and her husband, I must devote a chapter to the Brownings in Marylebone. The courteous American visitors who come and visit our Parish Church have constantly expressed a wish for such an account, however brief, and it is in a sense of responsibility for having made many vague promises as well as one definite one, that I venture to take up the time of Marylebone readers with what is bound in its nature to be the story of a love romance—*i.e.*, the connection of the Brownings with Marylebone. The most grimly archæological person could make nothing else of it. If you told the story of the Brownings in dates, it would still be a romance; as the story of a famine is told in statistics and remains a tragedy, or the story of war is told in agency bulletins and remains an awful and eternal enigma.

One of the most perfect unions that has ever been known, between two of the most remarkable poets in the world, was brought about in our own familiar neighbourhood, and must, therefore, take its place as part of our local history.

To begin with, it will take England a century or two, myriad disasters, and a revolution or so, to appreciate Browning. Browning is the great epitome of energy in philosophy, in poetry, in imagination. Into his soul, more than into any other man's, has entered the passionate realization of the eternal energy of things, of the universe—of the great physical world as well as the spiritual. To Browning all things are vital, ardent, important, teeming with life and meaning, from a crater to a cabbage-garden—from a Colossus to a city clerk. As his most brilliant biographer says of Dante in this connection, his soul has listened to "the roaring mills of God."

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

**“A little face like a white rose, and eyes like a spaniel’s with the
smile of a seraph in them, and a mist of womanly tears.”**



The American people, themselves energy personified, have caught and grasped Browning's philosophy with an enthusiasm that our cold, apathetic, pettishly-conservative British temperaments are at present incapable of understanding. To the Americans, Browning is one of the greatest philosophers the world has ever seen. To us, except a mere few, he is a rather silly and very unexplainable poet, who used an enormous amount of slang, and who did not write nearly such nice little jog-trot rhymes as Mrs. Hemans or Doctor Watts. Just as one might say Julius Cæsar could not really be compared to the Prince Consort because he could not draw so elegantly in crayon, or dance so prettily.

To an England whose rising generation is capable of nothing but the useless alternations of feverish excitement and utter mental apathy—the rush for emotion and the flat after-taste of it—strong, real intellectual energy is unexplainable. In an age when you can be “interviewed” in all the periodicals before you have done anything, real energy is, of course, at a discount. To such, Browning does and can mean nothing. He seems noisy and tiresome, and too much in earnest. But, perhaps, in about two hundred years' time it will dawn upon our race that it produced in the nineteenth century the greatest prophet of the energy of life that our country has ever known. Till then, the American people will be almost the sole pilgrims to the stone in Marylebone Parish Church, at which he knelt at his marriage, and to which he returned long years after, unutterably alone, to kiss.

The poetess, Miss Elizabeth Barrett, who lived for a time at 74, Gloucester Place, and later at 50, Wimpole Street, was as celebrated in her way as Browning was in his, when their romantic acquaintance came about. But she was, or her relatives thought she was, a hopeless invalid, doomed to a lifetime of existence in two darkened rooms : with no change possible but the change

from the bed to the sofa and back again. In spite of these gruesome conditions she was a most interesting personality. She was a pretty, charming woman, with long silky brown "ringlets," and large wistful brown eyes like a spaniel's; she read Greek as ordinary people read English, and was the kindest, brightest, most fascinating companion to her sister, Arabella, and a model daughter to her stern and narrow-minded father, with whom she lived. Though originally the result of an accident, her illness in these days, according to Chesterton, would be called "hysteria" pure and simple, and would be treated in an absolutely different manner. But in the forties of the last century there were no open-air cures, or common-sense nerve treatments, and so this strangely brilliant, graceful, gifted girl, was shut up in a kind of dark, close, horrible prison of invalidism through the loving but fearful ignorance of her relatives and physicians.

No friends were allowed to visit her, except only a rare few and those elderly people. A perfectly delightful old "gentleman of the old school," a Mr. Kenyon, and the dignified and gifted writer, Miss Mitford, then a lady in years, seem to be about the only people who were permitted to see her in her prison; and Miss Mitford has left a few graceful words describing the charm of Miss Barrett's combined beauty and intellect—the contrast of her childish and fragile appearance with her extraordinary mastery of language, and masculine grasp of "classics."

How she bore those long dreary years in the solemn house in Wimpole Street, it is hard to imagine. Except that her brilliant soul had wings and could fly to glowing countries and richer centuries as a swallow flies to the south and the sun, that solemn, gloomy British establishment, with its eternally shut doors, its pompous ceremonies, its grim furniture and grimmer master, its pitiless and irrevocable early-Victorian "correctness" and funereal splendour, must have crushed her entirely. Her sweet

patience seems to have been as great as her talents ; yet had she had a little less of it she might have escaped years before from the awful thralldom of her invalid existence. Her father, in his own stern unexplainable way, seems to have loved her. He used to go and pray over her twice a day, and forbid her to rise from her sofa or bed to breathe the fresh and beautiful air of God. It was his idea of love, and he was sincere. Fixed firmly in his lofty but limited mind was the one idea—he had a dying daughter, and that daughter must be guarded like a criminal from all disturbing influences, such as light, air, sunshine, friends, hope, beauty, laughter and life. To his lonely creed, only despair and gloom spelt goodness or obedience to the will of Providence.

Therefore, if we can conceive it, Elizabeth Barrett saw nothing for years in the way of landscape save the chimney-pots of the opposite houses in Wimpole Street, heard no music save the solemn door-bell echoing coldly through the gloomy vaults of her father's mansion ; yet made live, as no other poet has made live, the life, the joy, the glories of old Greece, saw the fleet-footed fauns, listened to the laughter of red-lipped, vine-crowned Bacchantæ, and shouted aloud in her soul like a child in the sun, with the glow and the splendour of a "rich dead century" that she saw only with the eyes of her poet spirit from behind the shut blinds of a room of suffering. If Elizabeth Barrett had never written a line, she would still have been a genius.

But the songs of this hidden singer were known to the world when she herself was practically unheard of. Robert Browning, then himself in the full glow of honours and fame, had read them with keenest admiration, and had made many enquiries about her personality, at last finding someone who knew her, the Mr. Kenyon already mentioned. This courtly old gentleman had already established himself as Elizabeth Barrett's "fairy-godfather," and used to go to Wimpole Street when permitted and chat

to her in his own whimsical way about "Mr. Browning" and what he said, and what he was doing, and how looking. At this time she took only a passing interest in the great poet from a personal point of view, having of course never met him, but had a passionate devotion to his work. He, on the other hand, seems to have felt an interest in the "veiled lady" of Wimpole Street that in the light of later events seemed positively prophetic. He did his best to bring about a friendship. He corresponded with her on the intellectual subjects that were her life, and her letters in reply were charming, friendly, and humorous, but gave no hint of a wish to behold her unseen correspondent. But one day Browning suggested something that was almost a blasphemy in that Wimpole Street convent—he suggested that he should call! She answered in consternation: such a thing was quite unheard of; no one ever saw her; no one ever dreamed of seeing her; "besides," she added naively, "I am not worth seeing." Browning's reply was characteristic: it was to the effect, "I will call at two on Tuesday."

They met on May 20th, 1845. Shortly after, he made her an offer of marriage. Again the shades of Wimpole Street were thrown into consternation and flutter unspeakable. Her sister Arabella, devoted as she was, argued that the thing was madness. Her father, her long array of medical advisers, her many and sincerely well-meaning relations rose up in one vast protesting body. Her own heart alone consented. Her reason said it could not be; for she herself believed, without a shadow of doubt, that she was a doomed invalid for the rest of her days, and had been told repeatedly that to be moved from the house alone would kill her. Browning's unutterable daring in even proposing such a thing, set all her guardians and relations raging; and a year after, according to her biographer, she was "still living under the great family convention which provided her with nothing but an elegant death-bed, forbidden to move, forbidden to see proper

daylight, forbidden to see a friend lest the shock should destroy her suddenly."

But a day came when this weary life was too much for her, and her physicians pronounced that she must go to Italy, or die. Then her father's strange love for her was tested and found wanting—he forbade the journey. A lady who loved her dearly came and repeatedly begged to be allowed to take her herself, but the uncompromising Mr. Barrett refused. Chesterton most humorously says, "he had grown to regard his dying daughter as part of the furniture." And this was Browning's opportunity—he wrote to her and proposed again that she should marry him and elope with him to Italy.

It took days and weeks, and budgets of letters to get her consent to this daring scheme. But one day she called her sister Arabella to her side, and asked her to order the carriage, to that lady's speechless amazement. Her devoted maid dressed her in an out-door garb—she had hardly worn such things since childhood—and she drove, accompanied by her sister, to Regent's Park, alighted and walked on the grass and leaned against a tree, and looked long at the leaves and the sky, thinking. Then she went home and wrote off "Yes." Why, oh why, is not that tree marked, singled out in some way to us people of Marylebone? Which out of the myriad trees is the one against which leaned the frail form of that almost dead woman solemnly emerging into life out of shadows? A slight figure in a black robe and under the black "Granny" bonnet, a little face like a white rose, and eyes like a spaniel's with the smile of a seraph in them, and a mist of womanly tears.

Browning was as prompt a bridegroom as he had been a lover. One grey misty morning in September, 1846, when the solemn Barrett household was hardly stirring, down the steps of 50, Wimpole Street, crept two figures, two timid women, peeping furtively from

side to side, and shutting the big door noiselessly. It was Elizabeth and her loving maid, a good, tender-hearted woman, named Elizabeth Wilson. Perhaps I should say three figures, for one was a pet dog, named "Flush," who had been his mistress's most faithful companion through many years of sickness, and who seemed now to recognize the occasion as romantically festive, for he insisted upon perilously barking in its honour, and had to be affectionately choked and muffled into silence.

Along Wimpole Street, possibly up Devonshire Street, and then up either Beaumont or High Street, they made their fearful way to the Parish Church, coaxing the too-congratulatory little dog into quieter ecstasies, and seeing enemies lurk in every doorway. Up the steps, into the shadows of the big church where Robert Browning stood awaiting them.

What that meeting was it is impossible to describe. The bridegroom had not seen the bride for a year till that moment. In that year both had suffered unspeakably. And now they were to be united. The vast shades of Marylebone Church must have looked ghostly on that grey morning, with no one but the clergyman, the clerk, and the black-robed pew-opener to bear them company. The short service was gone through, the registers signed, the faithful maid kissed in a shower of happy tears, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning drove away for ever from her life of pain and suffering to a happy home of her own under Italian skies, to restored powers and restored health.

The entry of that momentous ceremony may still be seen in the parish registers at Marylebone Parish Church. It reads very quaintly to us who seem to have known them: "September 12, 1846. Robert Browning, bachelor, gentleman, of full age; to Elizabeth Barrett Moulton Barrett, spinster, of full age, daughter of Edward Barrett, gentleman." It is signed by the clergyman, "Thomas

Woods Goldhawk, Curate," and the clerk, "James Silverthorn," and the loving maid, "Elizabeth Wilson."

Browning's signature is large, daring, and definite, without a flourish too much or an illegible letter: a very characteristic signature, and worthy of so headstrong a bridegroom. Sweet Elizabeth's signature is small and cramped, with very fine strokes; it looks a little tremulous, as though she could not sign for tears, as though her little hand had shaken like a leaf in the tempest of her new joy. Such a little fluttering contrast to the powerful hand above it. And, by the bye, she spells her name, "Elisabeth," with an "s" instead of a "z" in this wedding entry, a rather interesting point.

The old servant's name is written in an old-fashioned, crabbed, and "skimpy" hand, as of one unaccustomed to inscribing herself. The clerk's, in a flourishing style, as became a self-respecting Bumble in the forties. "Thomas Woods Goldhawk, Curate," appears to have been quite official. He seems to have regarded the whole affair as unnoticeable, and his signature is dashed off roughly, casually. Haply, poor man, he had no means of knowing, on that dim, misty September morning, that he was consecrating, perhaps, one of the most famous marriages the world has ever seen. No one told him, possibly, that the big, strong, ruddy-faced man, with keen genial eyes, was anything more than the healthy, energetic, English gentleman he looked; and as he signed himself, "Robert Browning, gentleman," not "poet." Probably, also, Thomas Woods Goldhawk never dreamed of reading poetry, and would not have been much wiser had the little, frail, angel-faced bride, put "poetess" after her tremblingly written name. At any rate, he has left us no story of that quiet wedding. No one will ever know, for instance, what they did with the little dog. Did he stay in the vestry, or was he hidden under Elizabeth Wilson's cloak? He could not have been left to yelp outside the door—that would have been

dangerous indeed ! Perhaps he awaited his mistress and new master in the cab outside the Church ? But, apart from church decorum, one weakly likes to think he hid under the maid's cloak and so was a witness to the ceremony, although the name, "Flush, pet-dog," does not appear in the formal entry of witnesses !

But "Thomas Woods Goldhawk, Curate," would not have been thanked for proving garrulous. Indeed, such a tendency would have been most dangerous, for Robert Browning, though a kindly man, could be as furious as Jove if anyone dared to discuss his private affairs in public. Perhaps that serious clerical gentleman in his Geneva gown was wise in his generation. Perhaps he thought : "This is a runaway match—licence—tremulous bride—tearful, agitated servant—resolute-looking man. Clearly an elopement, but it's not my business." All honour to him, if he was, for such a cause, laconic !

For fifteen happy years those two lived the most perfect married life the world has ever seen. Elizabeth's health was restored gradually, and with care. In her Italian home she wrote and worked, entertained friends, climbed mountains, and became the useful, healthy, joyful human being that heaven intended her to be. She was the proud mother of a little son, and the happiest of happy wives from first to last. Her father never forgave her, but her sister remained her friend.

Years afterwards, Mrs. Browning came and lived in Marylebone again for a time, where she and Browning, and their little son, became a centre of literary society. This was at a house in Devonshire Street, but the number of this house is unfortunately lost.

Many years after, when the bright and beautiful spirit of his wife had gone to its eternal home, Browning, stricken with grief, came back from Italy, and went alone to Marylebone Parish Church and kissed the Altar stone where, on the grey September morning he had knelt for his marriage blessing. Americans still come

and kiss that stone in memory of him ; and we, all English people as well as more particularly Marylebone people, though we may say very little, are conscious of the compliment, and tender them our sincere thanks.

I have to thank a courteous reader for the following letter throwing a light on the Brownings' second sojourn in Marylebone.

13, Dorset Street, Portman Square, W.

SIR,—In the fascinating article on the Brownings in relation to Old Marylebone which appeared in the July number of the St. Marylebone Magazine, the writer says that years after their marriage and residence in Italy the Brownings again lived for a time in Marylebone with their little son in a house in *Devonshire Street*, the number of which “is unfortunately lost.” It may help to clear up this point, and will, I hope, be of interest both to the writer of the article and the readers of the magazine, if I call attention to the dedication of “*Aurora Leigh*” to John Kenyon, in which Mrs. Browning says, “the last pages of which have been finished under the hospitality of your roof.” This dedication was dated from 39, *Devonshire Place*, W., October 17th, 1856. A not unnatural inference would be that No. 39, *Devonshire Place* was the residence of Mr. Kenyon, and that the Brownings extended their visit to him until they left for Italy soon after, for in this same dedication Mrs. Browning says that she was preparing to quit England. That in 1855 they were living at 13, Dorset Street, Portman Square, is indicated in the following extract from William Sharp’s “*Life of Browning*” :—“‘I remember,’ Browning writes, ‘Tennyson reading his “*Maud*” one evening while Rossetti made a rapid pen-and-ink sketch of him, very good, from one obscure point of vantage, which I still possess and duly value.’ This (says Sharp) took place at 13, Dorset Street, Portman Square, on September 27th, 1855, and those present besides the Poet Laureate, Browning, and Rossetti, were Mrs. Barrett Browning and Miss Arabella Barrett.” I have been told that previous to about the year 1887 the first floor at 13, Dorset Street was one large drawing-room. It is quite possible, therefore, that this interesting incident took place on that floor.—I am, Sir, faithfully yours, B. ERWIN.

CHAP. IX.—DICKENS IN MARYLEBONE.

AT first sight it appears to be one of the strangest spectacles in modern social development that we as a nation now despise Dickens, and consider ourselves remarkably intellectual for saying so, while the American nation, which is, roughly speaking, the living embodiment of materialism at its crudest, worships him. Dickens roused in England what was in his day practically dead—an appreciation of the fine gold to be found in the roughest human ore, the greatness that may lie behind a sordid veil, the pathos of the common-place. He told of people whose lives were ordinary to squalor, dull, unromantic, common, unadorned, and the marvellous triumph of great human character over the dreary treadmill of circumstance. And that in an age (the forties) when every respectable novelist represented the hero of his book as a romantic person with at least a “fine rolling eye,” and Macassar oil on his “locks”—unless he wanted to be called a cynic—when every lady who went through any adversities (and those romantic ones) was beautiful and emotional, and inclined to faint if the Berlin wool-work went contrary, or the canary died: an age when sorrow was not Sorrow with a capital S, without the appropriate stage effects: the very real unpicturesque troubles of the then submerged lower-middle classes being considered by literary circles as beneath notice. Those were the days when Charlotte Brontë considered herself a daring and dashing innovator—almost an iconoclast—when she courageously wrote a book, “Jane Eyre,” in which both hero and heroine were plain-looking, and glaringly unrelated to the nobility: when George Elliot, who wrote of carpenters’ and millers’ daughters, and small provincial townspeople, was considered “not nice,” and was only read by a few: when Thackeray, whom we now call a philosopher of the most genial and delightful kind, was

banned as a wicked cynic: when Bulwer Lytton and D'Israeli were possible, and found a sale, and never, never a smile: and "Cranford," which is brilliant humour, was taken seriously. Then Dickens rose up, and with that marvellous pen, which even to-day an eminent critic says had "no style," drew picture after picture of the beings he saw around him, the plainer, the quainter, the poorer, the more unpicturesquely unhappy the better. Or the more ordinary, or the more vulgar, or the more usual the better; anything to portray a real world and not a fancy one, peopled with dukes and duchesses, and adorned by virtue, tragedy, Macassar oil, wool-work mats, fine rolling eyes, and gentlemen whose whole moral attitude was that of a left hand in the breast of the coat, the right on a scroll, and a thunderstorm, St. Paul's, and a Corinthian pillar draped with crimson velvet in the background.

Dickens drew the world as he saw it, and a large part of the world he drew was Marylebone; while a number of the characters were genuine Marylebone portraits. Someone recently suggested writing a "Who's Who" of Dickens—a splendid idea if it could be at all adequately carried out, and one which would show how deeply Marylebone is bound up in the works of the great novelist. But perhaps until it ceases to be the fashion to be thought intellectual by decrying him, the project had better be postponed. At present its sale would be mainly in America, where, if they are materialistic, they are broad-minded, and do not find that objection to Dickens which was within the last few years published in England in all seriousness, *i.e.*, that he "only wrote about the middle classes."

The people who come to look at No. 1, Devonshire Terrace, are mainly Americans—the people of the prophet's own country pass by. Yet that house was not only lived in by Dickens, for years, but was enthusiastically loved by him, and described in 1839 by him as "a

house of undeniable situation and excessive splendour"; and from its walls came forth in the order named: "The Old Curiosity Shop," "Barnaby Rudge," "American Notes," "Martin Chuzzlewit," "Christmas Carols," "The Chimes," "The Cricket on the Hearth," "Dombey and Son," "The Battle of Life," "The Haunted Man," and "David Copperfield."

At this house met many and many a brilliant and merry party: the Carlyles, the Landseers, Frith, Eastlake, Hood, Rogers, Thackeray, Charles Knight, Marryat, and Macready. There was one memorable party, when Dickens, enquiring kindly after Carlyle's health, received from him the mock-melancholy reply that he was a "lone, lorn creature, and everything went contrary," in the words of "Mrs. Gummidge," to the ecstatic delight of Dickens. Longfellow visited him here, and wrote, in 1841, "I write this from Dickens's study, the focus from which so many luminous things have radiated. The raven croaks in the garden, and the ceaseless roar of London fills my ears."

The raven alluded to is one of the Marylebone celebrities commemorated by Dickens, for its portrait appears in "Barnaby Rudge." Its real name was "Grip," and it lived and died in the garden and stables of the Devonshire Terrace house, so maybe reckoned as a local lion in its day. It hated Topping, the groom; it bit the children's legs, and though Dickens humorously said "that was play," they secretly rejoiced when it died tragically, in 1841, much to the grief of its fond master, and making stern comments on the groom to the last. Dickens and his wife were almost childishly sorry to lose it, especially as it was always suspected to have been poisoned by a Marylebone butcher, whom it used to molest when he called for orders.

It is, perhaps, in "Dombey and Son" that Marylebone takes a specially important part. The church mentioned there, both at the christening of Paul

Dombey and the wedding of Mr. Dombey, is the Parish Church, which, as it then was, is faithfully described. Mr. Dombey himself was a gentleman well known to Dickens, and alluded to by him in letters by the familiar initial "A," and constantly mentioned in the directions to Cruikshank, his artist, and others. Florence Dombey is his own sweet daughter Kate; Paul his own little boy; Mr. Dombey's "corner house," so disapproved by Towlinson, is a description of the house in which Dickens himself lived, in Devonshire Terrace; the church clock, which wistful little Florence thought so solemn at nights, was Marylebone Parish Church clock; while the christening of Paul Dombey is a description of the christening of Dickens's own little boy. The clerk in this scene, of which the author says, "the clerk was the only cheerful person present, and he was an undertaker," is a portrait of a gentleman whose name is still affectionately remembered in Marylebone, and who was a friend of Dickens. I allude to Mr. William Tookey, the undertaker and Crown Clerk. Delightful, philosophic, humorous "Mr. Chick" is the great Macready, the actor, who lived at York Gate at the time the book was written, and who was also a very dear friend. When "Dombey and Son" first came out in *Household Words*, and Macready saw himself stand revealed in it, he came running round to Mr. Tookey's offices in High Street, roaring with laughter, and seized him by the hand and shook it violently in congratulation on their mutual immortality as the clerk and sponsor in "Dombey and Son." "Mrs. Miff," the pew-opener in the same work, who wore a "mortified bonnet" and "crackled" when she curtsied, and who attended at "Mr. Dombey's" melancholy wedding, is an exact portrait of the old lady who then occupied that post at the Parish Church; while "Mr. Sowndes," the beadle, is also a portrait of the beadle then existing. "Miss Tox" was a lady Dickens met at Lausanne during a long stay there, but the remembrance of whom

he brought back to Marylebone ; "Major Bagstock" was a gentleman who lived close to Regent's Park and who Dickens knew through Macready ; and the poor little "Charitable Grinder," in the tight leather "smalls," who used to be sat up in the roof of the church close to a great organ which "snorted" at him, was one of the small boys from Marylebone Charity School, which in those days included boys as well as girls.

"David Copperfield," who, as everyone knows, was Dickens himself when young, was written here ; and "Miss Mowcher," the dwarf, was a celebrated little Marylebone lady, a corn-cutter or chiropodist, who lived in a street off Regent's Park, where she had a large connection. Her real name was Miss Hall. So irate was this tiny little person at her portraiture that she nearly dragged poor Dickens into a libel action, but he managed to pacify her with the ready tact he knew so well how to use. "Agnes Wickfield" was his own sweet sister-in-law, beautiful Fanny Hogarth. "Dora," according to many people, is a portrait of his wife in her early days, a very pretty but singularly vague and helpless little lady : from Dickens's own letters there are strong hints that immortal "Mrs. Nickleby" in "Nicholas Nickleby," is also a portrait of Mrs. Dickens in later life. Whatever may be the truth of the former assertion, it is quite possible that sweet "Dora," charming as she was, would have been quite likely to mature in time into the amiable, fatuous, and useless babbler, "Mrs. Nickleby." "Dora" in later life, without the charm of youth and an angel's face, would, indeed, have been a horror, and is it not quite possible that "Mrs. Nickleby" shows us the particular kind of horror ? There is no doubt that Dickens was unhappy in his marriage, and if the above surmise be true he had reason enough.

In the "Uncommercial Traveller" he mentions the Parish Chapel, describing it as the church painted by Hogarth in the wedding-scene of "The Rake's Progress,"

which, of course, it is well known to be. The allusion occurs in a chapter of that work called "The City of the Absent," and the author relates a humorous and pathetic incident of a charity boy and girl making love in the graveyard, and how he rescued them from the wrath of the beadle. There is also an interesting mention of the then prevalent ruffianism in Regent's Park, when his own little children and their nurses could not take a walk there without insult and molestation from tramping women and girls—an evil which he was the means of eventually putting down by untiring appeals to the press and continual police court charges. In the same work he speaks with mock awe of the "frowning vistas of Harley Street and Wimpole Street"; which two streets were, no doubt, in the far-off forties gloomier places than the pleasant ones we know.

Besides the Devonshire Terrace house, Dickens owned a country house at Gad's Hill, to which he would constantly go when he needed change. His notions of country visits were erratic. He would get up at one o'clock in the morning, after having retired comfortably to rest, dress, and set off to walk to Gad's Hill, whatever the weather. In the course of such a nocturnal walk, he would pick up tramping acquaintances with whom he would sincerely fraternize, in order to study their words and ways for future productions. Or he would be found wandering the silent echoing streets of the City, at three o'clock in the morning, studying vagrants at coffee-stalls, or gazing into the ghostly river, and weaving a hundred new wonders in his restless, marvellous brain. His movements could never be depended upon, except that his friends might always look for the most unexpected things from him; and everybody he came across, it did not matter how insignificant, had to beware of being portrayed faithfully in his book. He used to say, "I can't help such-and-such a character being a portrait of so-and-so. So-and-so shouldn't exist if he wants to escape por-

trayal. I've no grudge against him—in fact I love him, he's a dear fellow. But he grew into my book." Then so-and-so might say, "But, my dear Dickens, I never did this or I never did that," pointing to incidents in the work. At which Dickens would reply impatiently, "But my dear so-and-so, you *would* have done both this and that under given circumstances!" This was generally found unanswerable.

It was at Devonshire Terrace, one snowy winter's day, that his two little girls spent hours trying to teach him the polka, in preparation for a children's party they were to give; and in the small hours of the morning after the lesson he woke up, and could not recollect the step that he had laughingly laboured so hard to learn, so up he rose in that bleak wintry atmosphere and worked at the polka step on his bedroom floor, till he remembered it again and could once more face his rigorous little teachers.

As everyone knows, the original Bleak House is a house at Broadstairs, but it is not so generally known that "Esther Summerson," its heroine, is an exact portrait of a young ward of Dickens's own—a lady who was left an orphan when a mere girl, and a ward of Chancery, named Esther Elton. This lady afterwards became Mrs. Nash, and was the mother of the present Chaplain of the Marylebone Workhouse, the Rev. J. A. Nash. Her death at an advanced age, only took place quite recently. The exquisite picture of "Esther Summerson," is in no way an over-drawn portrait of one of the sweetest, truest, and most lovable of women, to whom her guardian was deeply attached, so that he could weave the beautiful story of "Mr. Jarndyce's" love for his ward, with a sympathy and simplicity that appeals to everyone.

These are but a few instances gathered at random of Marylebone people portrayed in Dickens's works. Space forbids a further enumeration, even if the patience of readers permitted it. But there is one word more and then I have done. We are apt to imagine great writers

who have passed away as remote, distant beings, conscious always of Olympian greatness, and taking no part in ordinary daily things outside their own studies. We are inclined to forget that Dickens was an ordinary Marylebone gentleman with absolutely no "pose." A handsome man with a keen face and merry eyes, a quick, alert walk, a neatly trimmed pointed beard, and hair worn a little long, after the fashion of the day, and with a natural curl in it, whom one was liable to meet anywhere about High Street, Regent's Park, St. John's Wood, any day, fine or wet—that was Dickens as Marylebone knew him. A jolly gentleman, well known to all; as courteous to a cabman as to an earl; with a joke and a ready laugh, or a sympathetic ear for everybody, and only a sudden sad shadow sometimes looming over his humorous face, like a cloud hiding the sun, when alone with himself and his own strange knowledge of the awful mystery—humanity.

He has gone from Marylebone—he has been gone many a long year—but one never so much as dreams that he is dead. Such souls live for ever. Not only our sincere Christian belief tells us this, but something inherent in our very being: a conviction, vague, intuitive, unreasoning and perfectly absolute, which is proof against all doubt, or possibility of doubt, that all that was best and grandest in this most gifted of men, still lives on, and works on, and will so live when the Marylebone we know is forgotten.

CHAP. X.—CHARLES WESLEY IN MARYLEBONE.

A GOOD man's glory is his absolute belief in God : Charles Wesley's religion was higher than this—he believed in God absolutely and in man passionately. His faith was the unutterable belief in humanity which belongs to those who have been in the heights and in the depths. One needs to be first an archangel to understand the human soul as Charles Wesley understood it.

Before coming to the familiar, happy, cheery social life of Charles Wesley as a burgher of Marylebone, one would like to ask, For what does the world call him famous ?

In my own perhaps insignificant judgment, it would have been enough to exalt him into a great man simply to have written one of his hymns, " Jesu, lover of my soul." That alone makes him into a peerless moral teacher and an immortal, just as Cardinal Newman is immortal simply for having written, " Lead, kindly Light," that wild, lone cry of a soul in the darkness, apart from all his poems, philosophies, theologies, and apologies. Or the dying Henry Francis Lyte for his never-to-be-forgotten glorious prayer, " Abide with me, fast falls the eventide."

To begin with, Charles Wesley was a poet, after that a saint. Had he chosen to devote himself to " profane " poetry, he would have ranked as an English classic in literature, as he now does in hymnology. And he may be certainly called the creator of a new epoch in hymnology and the founder of a deathless school of hymns—the human school. In those days there were no Keble, no Caswall, no Faber : these writers, great as they are, followed Wesley's inspiration. Centuries before him, St. Bernard, from the stillnesses of his white cloister at Clairvaux had flooded Europe with the golden glow of his heavenly songs, " Jerusalem the golden," " For thee, O dear, dear country," " Ah, my sweet home, Jerusalem," and, like the cry of a wearied spirit after a spent emotion,

CHARLES WESLEY.

“He would jog along the lanes and meads of Marylebone, those heavenly songs ringing in his ears.”



"Brief life is here our portion," and "The world is very evil." All these the beautiful or melancholy communings of a white-robed, white-souled Cistercian abbot.

Then the hymns of St. Thomas Aquinas, like organ music or deep, rich stained windows in their relation to other sacred songs, must always hold their own through the ages for pure doctrine, solid majesty, and sonorous dogma. Of these, "Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle," is perhaps the most gorgeous, with its terrible verse, "Crux fidelis," the clarion-like "Urbs beata," or "Blessed city, heavenly Salem," and the solemn and seldom heard Communion hymn, "Adoro te."

These hymns are ecclesiasticism in the concrete: they are only heard to perfection in their original Latin, and they need great cathedrals with dim, lofty roofs and solemn forests of carved and fretted arches, and all the splendour of a mighty Church ceremonial, before they can be fully understood.

St. Thomas Aquinas expressed the Church on earth, the Church of his day, the mediæval Church in all its splendour, awe, dogma, and mystery: St. Bernard of Clairvaux, the Church in Heaven the vision of the future: Charles Wesley, just the Church that is in every human soul—the possibility of the union between man and his God. But strangely enough to a vast number of present-day people, Charles Wesley's name is vaguely confused with his brother John's, or else he is credited with having been an 18th century religionist, a preacher and good minister. Yet such praise, though intrinsically true, is equivalent to calling Michael Angelo "a pretty artist," or Wagner "a nice musician." A lady once said the Coliseum was "nice"; and one has heard similar critics describe a thunderstorm as "noisy" and the sea as "tiresome." To such Charles Wesley was a Wesleyan preacher, a "nice" preacher, but inferior to his brother John in that respect; a shadow, rather weakly cast of his brother John: a kind of fraternal

anti-climax. Devout Wesleyans know better, but the average Church of England worshipper goes away as a rule with this or a similar impression. There is also a vague idea prevalent that the trio of great and good men who led the Revivalist Movement in the 18th century were three preachers each vying with the other in pulpit oratory to the glory of John Wesley, the moderated praise of George Whitfield, and the almost extinguished fame of Charles.

As a matter of fact, that great revivalist upheaval was worked by a far more concrete and definite organisation than three random rival preachers. To John, as the moving spirit, the main glory is due. John Wesley is believed in now as men believe in St. Paul, and rightly.

But his extraordinary power lay less in his preaching, regarded as a showy talent, than in his almost supernatural personal magnetism, genius for organisation, and his character for undeniable and absolute saintliness. It is now put forth that of the three evangelists, Whitfield was strictly the most talented orator, pure and simple; and had the movement depended on mere wordy eloquence, he would now be accounted the greatest. But Charles was the "singer" of the mission, and though a powerful preacher, it is in his hymns that his genius is manifested, and it was through them that he preached as mightily as either of his fellow labourers: some say more so, for he preaches still.

To understand this power, we must remember that the majority of the early followers of the Wesleys were poor people, unlettered and untaught, many of them unable to write their own names. To such an ignorant, hungry crowd, what must have been those human, kindly, sympathetic hymns, with their easy style and dogma, their generous encouragement, their simple consolation?

"Soldiers of Christ, arise!" for instance, must have marked to them a new era in hymnology altogether, with its spirited call to individual life and energy.

"Hark! the herald angels sing," is another which must have come with a freshness and vigour quite unknown. The ancient Catholic carols, happily revived for us, were unknown to the majority of poor folk in the 18th century, who must have almost heard the song of the "herald angels" over again in Wesley's beautiful words. "Love divine, all love excelling," is an exquisitely sympathetic fragment, and "Hail the day that sees Him rise," a trumpet-call to courage and fresh effort. And how he must have completely gathered up and soothed all the sorrows of those tired, ignorant lives, with the now admittedly divine words of "Jesu, lover of my soul." One can see now the breathless crowds of pit "Geordies," toil-worn and half-stupefied with the long battles with poverty and squalor; the weary, bedraggled women; the unkempt babies, and ill-clad, half-wild children; the tired old folk, sitting apart, and shaking palsied heads over the life-long riddle of hopelessness, oppression, hunger, and pain. All the grim signs and hall-marks of that century when England's poorer classes were the most trodden-down, ill-cared for, brutalized rabble in Europe according to Meiklejohn. And one can see John the preacher, cameo-faced, white-headed, and passionately inspired, exhorting in their midst; and Charles the singer, sturdy, kindly, handsome: a little man, with a face strangely like Balzac's, with the steadfastness of Milton, and the burning eyes of Isaiah, leading the singing, when the sermon was over and the hearts of those desolate creatures stirred unspeakably. What a song for the uncared-for poor of all days—

"Other refuge have I none:
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee;
Leave, ah! leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me.
All my trust on Thee is stay'd:
All my help from Thee I bring;
Cover my defenceless head
With the shadow of Thy wing."

How warm and strangely comforting the words must have lingered in those long-neglected hearts, when the stars had come out in the roof of that simple temple "not made with hands," whose floor was the sweet-smelling grass, whose walls the woodbine-covered hedges, long after the sounds of prayer and praise had died away on the still evening air, and the two evangelists had wended their way to their humble lodging in the hush of the starlight, and of the peace which passeth all understanding.

My brief narrative professes to deal only with the life of Charles Wesley in Marylebone. I will, therefore, pass over his early years, his life at Westminster School, his subsequent ordination as a clergyman of the Church of England, and following that, his long toiling hand-in-hand with his brother in the great Revivalist cause: the cause which cut them off, against their own will, from the church of their profession, and almost forced them into a division that they so little contemplated in their earlier days.

I also pass over the long missionary work, first in Georgia, and afterwards in the provinces, and come to the time when Charles Wesley found himself summoned to the metropolis, to assist in the great work at the City Road Chapel. He was then living at Bristol, working hard on very little means, with a family of five children, when the command came to seek for souls in fresh fields. He had, quite early in his career, married a lady of great beauty and good position, the famous Sarah Wesley, who had herself left a happy and luxurious home to follow the fortunes of the man she loved and help him in his mission.

At this time, of course, he had many more than spiritual cares: his anxieties were great, and his large family growing up to the age when all the means he possessed were required for their education. His wife worked and toiled cheerfully enough, but even her charming, dauntless spirit could not make both ends always meet. She taught her boys music, as she was well qualified to do, and gave

"lessons" to all her little ones, besides making and mending all their clothes, attending to her household affairs, and assisting her husband in his ministry to the poor and the sick. She was a jewel of a woman, whose brave, merry courage never flagged, and whose goodness, culture and beauty must have shed a constant lustre of joy and happiness round her wherever she went.

But even she wondered what future lay before them in the strange city : where and how they would all live. Her sweet mother's prayers must have risen morning, noon, and night to the Eternal Fatherhood to provide for her helpless brood and her toiling husband, as such women's prayers do rise.

And the romance of the Christian life is unfathomable : for one day a letter came from a Mrs. Gumley, a lady of wealth and a good Wesleyan, whose deep and sincere friendship for Charles and his wife was of long standing—she asked to be allowed to present them with a house in London. The house was in Marylebone : No. 1, Great Chesterfield Street, and she proposed to hand it over to them for their life use. With almost tears of gratitude, they accepted this generous offer, and shortly after settled up their affairs and came to London, Charles and his elder boy going first to reconnoitre, and his wife following with their little ones and such quaint and modest furniture as they possessed ; sweet Sarah, perhaps, silently wondering whether it would fit the large London house at all, and privately planning what she would do with a wilderness of bare rooms to make them "home" for her dear ones. Travelling in those days was no light matter. What days and nights they must have spent trundling along the bad roads ! What sacrifices they must have made for one another—the tired children, the frugal means, the untried future, the unknown way, and, from the wife's point of view, an extra care in that brilliant father, who must be kept from undue anxiety or material worry—the dear grey head that must lie in

peace at night for the sake of the great mission, whatever her own toil.

Gallant Sarah Wesley! With her brave serene mind, her strong grasp of present needs, her child's faith in God, what a ministering angel she must have been on that weary journey. One can almost see her calm, clear eyes, her smooth brow, her lovely face, as, her many charges put to rest, she sat and tried to read in the night sky something of their future home. Of all the Marylebone ghosts this is to me the dearest! But when at last she got to Marylebone, what a joy awaited her! for, instead of an empty, echoing house, whose cold boards clanked a mockery of "home," she found it fully furnished with everything they could want, by the friend who knew them so well that she had made a "study" for the master, and put a spinet in the wide old oak parlour for Mistress Wesley's use! She was a friend indeed, and deserves to be remembered among friends for all time.

That old house is no more. Legend says it was a wide, roomy, oak-panelled old symphony in bricks and mortar, dating from the prim and architecturally peaceable days of Anne. It had, tradition says, wide old windows opening outwards, with leaded panes, black oak beams, red tiles, and open fire-places; also a beautiful front door, and a garden for pinks, Virginia-stocks, "honesty," and lavender to grow in fragrant comfort. Marylebone was then a large growing village or country suburb: fields and lanes blossoming in dog-roses and buttercups stretched and wound about the Wesleys' home, and the River Bourne running through York Gate and across Oxford Street no doubt shone silver on their horizon. As the centre of Charles Wesley's greatest work, as the cradle of the loveliest hymns in the world, as the place which once enshrined as in a casket so much sanctity, genius, and grace, this house should surely have remained sacred. If only as the sweet spot in which once dwelt a perfect Christian family, this lovely place might have been preserved, a Bethel in a Babel.

But to the bland vandal of the age called Early Victorian, what, save his own pocket, was sacred? That fair place, echoing with sweet and hallowed memories, was pulled down by hands that we cannot now execrate because they are too insignificant to have been remembered; and, heaven alone knows for what rhyme or reason, in its place was built a house, or row of houses, whose supreme severity leaves nothing to be suggested or desired in that way. No. 1, all that now remains where once Wesley's home stood, is a tall, narrow strip of a house, and probably dates from about 1850; it has a lofty, narrow doorway, a passage like a "Tube" tunnel, and an unlovely exterior. It is let out in "floors" to poor families, and stands next door to a public-house. The pilgrim who goes to muse sadly upon this Ichabod, feels a fresh pang because of the poor little unwashed children who loiter about the door and staircase. There is no trace of Wesley save in the name of the street two doors away—Wesley Street; this also a slum, mediocre, and drab.

Yet on this identical spot, though in far, far other surroundings, Charles Wesley lived for seventeen useful years, working, writing, preaching, and loving, as was his happy way. Green fields stretched from Chesterfield Street to Whitfield's Tabernacle in Tottenham Court Road; and Marylebone Road, then called the New Road, was in those days but a country highway. He kept a plump white pony, or cob, to carry him to and fro about his parochial business or to the chapel, and was a familiar figure in the lanes and byways of Marylebone in his blue coat, which he wore for many years, his riding-boots and his broad hat: a handsome portly man, shorter and somewhat stouter than his brother John, with decisive, aquiline features, keen blue eyes, and long white hair falling on either side of his clean-shaven, kindly face. It was on the back of this white cob that many of his hymns were composed. He would jog along the lanes and meads of Marylebone, those heavenly songs ringing in his ears, his face absorbed and brooding, so that he got quite a name for unconsciously "cutting"

his best friends. When he arrived, on these occasions, at any house, he would rush in and call for "paper, paper," eagerly set down his flying but precious thoughts, and this done, turn and greet with his blessing the inmates of the house he had so oddly invaded! He had a name for being eccentric in his manners, and perhaps we may admit that he earned it.

His two sons, Charles and Samuel, inherited their mother's musical talent, and afterwards became celebrated musicians, Charles being the first organist at Marylebone Parish Church and a composer of no small merit, while Samuel became a yet more celebrated composer, and is described in Naumann's "History of Music" as "great." Before he was three years old he played the harpsichord with great accuracy, and in after years he became the first English interpreter of Bach. Mrs. Wesley had a clear, bell-like voice, her husband a full baritone; and sweet, indeed, must have been those famous musical evenings in the old Chesterfield Street house, when such an odd party as Arne, Arnold, Doctor Johnson, Lord Mansfield, Lord Mornington, the Bishop of London, and the Danish Ambassador mingled amicably together in the spell of Handel's divine harmonies, and the spell of Charles and Sarah Wesley's presence.

Handel's own harpsichord stood in the place of honour in the dim oak-panelled parlour, the most precious possession of the younger Charles Wesley; and beautiful Sarah, that fair and famous matron, must have made a picture as she stood in her prim Quaker garb of grey, with cap, kerchief, and folded hands, to sing "I know that my Redeemer liveth," while the boy Charles accompanied her on the master's own instrument, and out of the shadows of the wide old room lighted by candles in silver "stocks," shone the faces of the learned, the great, and the wise: giant Johnson and brilliant Arne, hushed alike into rapt silence, in the summer dusk, when the scent of clove-pinks wafted in from the still garden, and far away came the low of distant kine.

From this centre Charles Wesley held many open-air services, preaching sometimes at York Gate, then Marylebone Fields, by the river Bourne ; sometimes near the Tyburn Road, now Oxford Street ; and near the Tyburn Gibbet, now the Marble Arch. He must have looked with stern disapproval at the Marylebone Gardens, so near his house, and slowly becoming more unruly and less savoury, and his sufferings and jeopardy during the famous Gordon riots are a chapter in themselves.

In Chesterfield Street he was often visited by his more famous brother John, the father of the movement, who also lived in London, and whose own unhappy domestic life must have made his brother's *ménage* seem like a paradise. It was in this house that the energetic, ter-magant Mrs. John Wesley secured her husband and brother-in-law in a room, by bolting the door and putting her back to it, and set to work in good earnest to charge them roundly with their faults, real and imaginary. Upon which Charles's ready wit rose to the occasion : in his rich, loud baritone voice he suddenly commenced quoting the *Æneid* in Latin with an aspect of mock fury, hurling out the rolling syllables as he alone had the ready facility to do. With a shriek that she was being cursed, the angry woman tore open the floor and fled, frightened out of her wits. She left her brother-in-law's faults alone after that. Even saints have a sense of humour !

He lived to an honoured old age. His children grew up around him respected and loved, some of them distinguished : his wife an ornament to her sex and a pattern of perfect Christian matronhood. When, after his long, useful, and beautiful life the Angel of Death called him, he sent for the Rector of Marylebone, the Hon. and Rev. John Harley, later Bishop of Hereford and brother of the famous Harley, Earl of Oxford, and said to him, "Sir, whatever the world may say of me, I have lived and I die a member of the Church of England. I pray you bury me in your churchyard." The Rector, all honour to him, consented to do so. Charles

Wesley departed this life on Saturday, March 29, 1788, and his body was carried to Marylebone Churchyard, the pall borne by eight clergymen of the Church of England. Hundreds of his own people followed him to his resting-place in the old Parish Churchyard, though not a little controversy arose over his place and manner of burial : John Wesley and others considering it somewhat of a falling-back from the bold line they had taken ; and some Church of England divines resenting what they were pleased to call the return, at his death, of a stray sheep from their ecclesiastical fold ! There is something almost laughable, something ironical, in that inevitable, small, human squabble over the last hallowed remains of a man whose great soul belonged neither to time nor party, Church nor Church faction : who was the priest of Humanity, the minister to fallen manhood, the preacher of Christ, not creed. Whose only temple was—

“That cathedral, boundless as our wonder,
Whose quenchless lamps the sun and moon supply,
Its choir the winds and waves, its organ thunder,
Its dome the sky.”

And there under a plane tree in a little dark shady churchyard he lies, while outside the iron rails the race of life and noise and traffic whirls ceaselessly on.

But year by year good Americans come and visit that sacred place ; and good English Wesleyans too, only these more rarely.

It is a very ugly tomb. The earlier Wesleyans placed a simple stone over their dear Father in God ; the more ambitious Wesleyans of the fifties or sixties erected in all sincerity a very hideous kind of Cleopatra's needle in its place, which has turned in the course of years a shabby drab and sorely needs cleaning or restoring. Round it a few white stocks and marigolds linger weedily, and the dirty London sparrows are rather fond

of it as a public ground for consultations, love-making, or fights.

John Wesley and George Whitfield lie in the yard of the City Road Chapel : but in Westminster Abbey is a tablet erected to the memory of the Wesleys which in exquisite beauty, pathos, and dignity has hardly its equal, and compensates somewhat for those lonely and divided graves. The faces of the two brothers appear side by side, bas-relief profiles—those cameo-like faces, the strongly-drawn masculine contour of Charles ; the fine, exquisite, pure outline of John : looking earnestly forward as they looked in life. Two brothers, whose love for one another was great, “passing the love of women,” who worked hand in hand, who died in harness, and who will be remembered so long as the world remembers the two Boanerges, John and James, who walked together through the golden harvest-fields of Galilee.

CHAP. XI.—CONCLUSION.

IF you allow anything imperishable sufficient time, it will become valuable, only you must not be impatient—it must be granted a full maximum of years to prove its merits. A hundred years ago quite educated people pulled down their houses, criss-crossed with black oak beams, and tiled in soft reds that no “art” firms can now imitate, to build imitation Roman or Greek villas in stucco, with mean banisters and hollow Corinthian pillars, like pipes. They did not value their quaint and beautiful abodes—these were not old enough to have become valuable. Now they would fetch any price. In some far, dim future, a day will dawn when what we even now call “Early Victorian” and frightful, will evolve into a cult, and will command any money. It is not easy to suppose it, because we are but human and limited in our vision after all, but there will come a period when impossible wax flowers under bell-glasses, “shell-work” frames, and bad imitation engravings of “Bolton Abbey” or the “Hunted Stag,” will be collected by *virtuosi*, and lectured upon enthusiastically by Ruskins-to-be. They will have their value as exponents of an epoch. Every beaded wool-work stool, every black horse-hair suite with its black sofa like a tomb, will have its niche and perhaps its real admirers. So that, given about eighty years, or perhaps a hundred, to mellow, any object may become a prize.

In the same way social periods improve by keeping. The Johnsonian age is now raved about by literary people who would have been, secretly, very sorry to have had to pay for their literary fame by almost certain beggary, as was usually the case then. It is, however, old enough to have managed to get its drawbacks forgotten. The days of “satin and patches” are extolled in song, play, and story, because they are so far past that minor drawbacks, such as the lawless streets, the intem-

perate vulgarities, and the defective sanitation, are left out of count. Even a later age—the early quarter of the nineteenth century—is now held up in sincere admiration because it is pretty well out of the personal memory of most men; and is commemorated in miniatures, in Sheraton tables, and all the fashionable *bric-à-brac*, real or imitation, which one now sees everywhere.

But the age still to be revived in all its glory is the Victorian—and perhaps it is not yet *quite* old enough. It will be interesting when it is. The first young and modish lady, for instance, to wear a cap (in the house), like a windmill, with two lace lappets hanging from it which require constant rolling in the fingers, will create a sensation unspeakable; also, when Messrs. Maple first seriously suggest black horse-hair for one's new dining-room, and put green glasses on the mantel-piece with "spills" in them, it will be a day to be remembered. In the natural course of things, something of the kind is bound to come; but meanwhile the early Victorian age lies in the lumber-room, consequently, my small historical summary having now reached it, I draw to a close, knowing that no one pretends to care for a period so raw as to be under eighty years old.

Marylebone's history has not ceased—it is building itself up day by day, as fast as it ever did in the days that we now call picturesque; but in the rush and whirr of the machinery one cannot yet analyse the product; a day will come when others will do that for us, therefore, my present task is over.

One or two threads I must gather up before closing, though I fancy they refer to facts about which all my readers are as well acquainted as myself, perhaps better. One is, the great fact that Marylebone is one of the celebrated homes of Cricket as an international game, and that the nursery, as it were, of Lord's, now famous all over the world, was Dorset Square. There, until 1814, a small green owned by one Lord, the keeper of a small beer-

house adjoining, was the ground of the Marylebone Cricket Club, as everyone knows, the forerunner of the M.C.C. In 1814 the rapid growth of handsome houses and squares, following on the development of Regent's Park under the Prince Regent made a move necessary, and Mr. Lord next rented a portion of the Park itself, called the North Bank, for the cricket matches. This was shortly replaced by a more satisfactory and permanent ground, one of the fields lying towards Hampstead, which gradually grew into the Lord's we know so well. This was first fenced round with wood, as the old pictures show, and gentlemen attired in white flannel cricketing clothes and high top hats played matches, one would imagine under some difficulties! Later on, fashion apparently gave way to utility, for even in 1820 prints appeared showing the gallant cricketers divided on the subject of hats—half wearing cricket caps very like a cross between those we know and a jockey's cap, the other half clinging desperately to the tall black "chimney-pots." A little later the cricketing caps won the day and the tall hats were laid for ever on the shelf, together with the curved bats and abbreviated wickets of those early cricketing days.

Regent's Park was, as everybody knows, built under the auspices of the Prince Regent, and was designed with great care with a view to its being an aristocratic and healthy suburb, looking as it did straight over Marylebone Fields. Portland Place was intended as an approach to it, and Regent Street as a handsome and ornamental continuation of Portland Place, connecting the Park with the grand avenue of Buckingham Palace. A summer palace was to have been built for the Sovereign in Regent's Park, but this was never brought about. It is interesting to reflect that Regent Street, that boulevard of shops, was not intended entirely for shops, but was partly designed for the town houses of the nobility. It is still quite easy to trace the resemblance between

the upper parts of the Regent Street buildings and the white houses in Regent's Park, and to see how beautiful and extensive was the design of those dead-and-gone builders, though much of it has fallen through in the course of the years. There is no doubt that but for their forethought and care this most unique and picturesque district of London would have become by this time a mass of densely packed streets and shops. There are some ghosts one would like to shake hands with.

We have the great Mrs. Siddons to thank for Clarence Gate, by a very strange chance that is not without its humour. Her house, which still stands at the top of Upper Baker Street, commanded a lovely view of the far-stretching Marylebone Fields when it was built, and she was accustomed to entertain her friends in the quaint old parlour, whose wide windows looked over such a smiling and pastoral scene. The Prince Regent's plans for Regent's Park filled her with dismay, for in the original design Cornwall Terrace was continued unbrokenly, and joined to Clarence Terrace, thus shutting out all Mrs. Siddons's lovely prospect. The "Stone Goddess" was not without resource, however: instead of agitating, raving, and protesting, she simply wrote in her own direct sincere fashion to the Prince Regent himself—a pretty letter, naïvely stating the case, and pleading in a placid and quite unabashed manner for her right to her pretty view of "the country." She won her point without further effort. The Regent was a gallant man, and Sarah Siddons was so beautiful, so queenly, and so talented, that her quiet request came as a command from a goddess: Clarence Gate was designed, and to her death Mrs. Siddons feasted her eyes on the smiling pastures her artist-soul delighted in so truly.

Of course there are endless more things to say about Marylebone, and of course its history did not cease in the forties of the last century; but there is a limit to the patience of even the kindest readers, and enough has

been told in these eleven chapters to give a general idea of the story of our Borough to those who were not before acquainted with it. I have tried to give an outline of its human or social history rather than a solemn collection of data, dull alike to readers and writer. I have in no way professed to write anything approaching the tremendous seriousness of a regular history, or even a strictly historical account of the place: from the first I have endeavoured as sincerely as possible to deal with the purely human aspect of Marylebone's story; an aspect which is ever new, ever varying and ever capable of fresh comment or extension, since the study of human character is the most illimitable science in the world. These dead and gone men and women are landmarks as it were in the great dim wastes of the past: from the study of their individual experience we unconsciously study the times they lived in, and perhaps equally unconsciously learn by philosophic comparison more about our own. They built up in their day what is now handed down to us to continue building. Patiently, solemnly, wisely, in the main, though perhaps with many mistakes and many falls, they tried to do what we are still trying to do, what we are bound to do whether we will or no, for not one unit in our crowd can avoid playing his part in the history of his borough or his day. It is rather a solemn thought, that perhaps those earlier builders can see what stones we are adding to their walls with that now clearer vision of theirs which sees that the house wherein the Lord hath no building is labour lost: Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

And out of the solemn procession of grey ghosts of Marylebone, many voices echo to us down the years—the sonorous voice of old Samuel Johnson in solemn warning and stern exhorting to duty, truth, and right; the clarion voice of Browning to energy; the laughing voice of Dickens, with the sound of tears in it, to charity

and humanity ; the gentle voice of Elizabeth Barrett Browning to earthly love, the angel voice of Adelaide Anne Proctor to divine. Elizabeth Montagu sends a grave summons to wisdom ; Sarah Wesley to Christian wifehood and lovely womanliness ; James Boswell to perfect friendship ; William Turner to steady industry ; and Pitt, Burke, and Hogarth, to manly public spirit and social reform. So every voice speaks to us its own special teaching and lesson, an innumerable cloud of witnesses ; and last but not least the herald voice of the divine Charles Wesley singing down the years' distances those deathless hymns, which are a trumpet-call to brotherly love and unity :

“ Let Saints on earth in concert sing
 With those whose work is done,
 For all the servants of our King,
 In heaven and earth are one.

One family we dwell in Him,
 One Church above, beneath,
 Though now divided by the stream :
 The narrow stream of death.”

THE END.

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